



# HANSEL AND GRETEL

## TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

**This guide is intended to prepare you and your students for the upcoming performance of the adapted opera, *Hansel and Gretel*.**

Please use the Table of Contents to find the lessons prepared for your subject area. We have supplied all the information needed for you to be successful in preparing your students for the show. However, you are not restricted to the lessons in this resource guide. Be creative!

# HANSEL AND GRETEL

## TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

Dear Educator,

Thank you for scheduling Arizona Opera's Education program *Hansel and Gretel* at your school!

At Arizona Opera, we believe that providing opportunities to explore the performing arts allows students to discover the world around them. We strive to help students find and explore their own, unique voices.

*Hansel and Gretel* is a great way for students to experience opera. The beautiful, familiar storyline and fairytale setting makes this a great opera for all ages.

Throughout the program students will be introduced to musical concepts including basic voice types found in classical music, diverse musical structures, and operatic terminology. Additionally, they will learn skills such as evaluating content and how language functions in differing contexts.

This Teacher Resource Guide will help you to prepare your students for the performance. Whether you have only 5 minutes to prepare or multiple class periods, this guide should provide you with lesson plans to incorporate opera into your classroom.

Additionally, we have podcasts on [www.azopera.org](http://www.azopera.org) that are available for you to play for your students. These activities are just guides, so please feel free to make them your own!

We look forward to visiting your school and please contact me at [education@azopera.org](mailto:education@azopera.org) or at (602) 266-7464 with any questions.

Best,



Joshua Borths  
Director of Education and  
Community Engagement  
Arizona Opera



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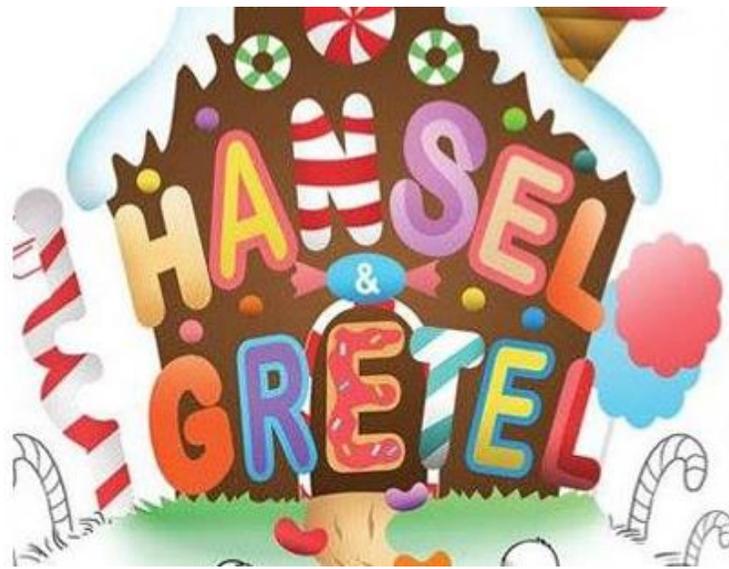
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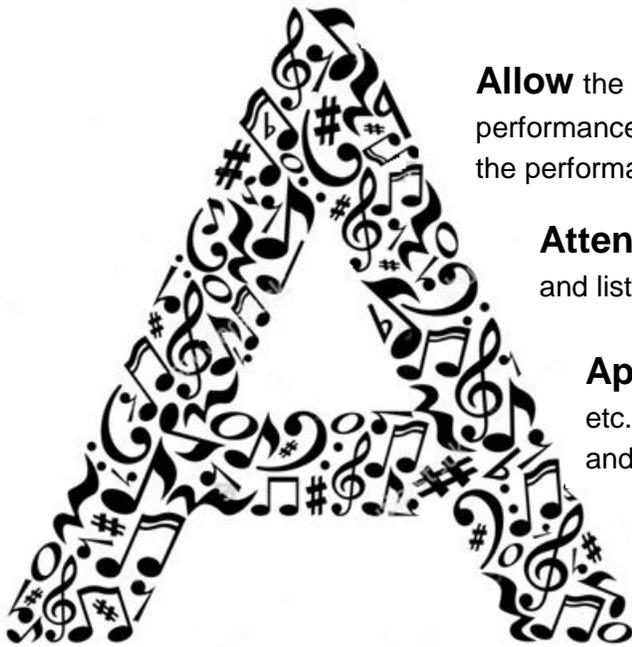
# Attending the Opera

Unlike the actors on your television, performers on the stage are aware of their audience and want very much to tell their story.....live! By the time you see a scheduled performance, many people have worked very hard to bring you their best efforts.

In order to show respect for those efforts, every audience member must give the performance their full attention and avoid any behavior that interferes with the performance.

We have rules that help us accomplish this goal, and you should do your best to understand and follow them.

## The 4 A's of Audience Etiquette



**Allow** the performers to do their job by not talking during the performance, unless you are responding to their prompts. Once the performances begins, stay seated.

**Attend** or pay attention to the performance by watching and listening with both your eyes and ears!

**Appreciate** the performers by laughing, applauding, etc., but remember, keep your reactions appropriate and do not disturb the flow of the performance.

**Applaud** at the conclusion of the performance.



# About This Performance

*Hansel and Gretel* is one of the most beloved operas ever written due to its accessible score and familiar, fairytale world. In fact, *Hansel and Gretel* is one of the best “first operas” you can see, and for many, a love of *this* opera results in a lifelong love of the art form itself. Unlike many operas that are adapted for school age audiences (like last year’s *Rusalka: The Littlest Mermaid*), *Hansel and Gretel* was originally written for the enjoyment of children, making it the perfect opera for your students!

The performance you will see today is a new production, meaning that we have made these sets and costumes exclusively for this school tour. The sets are intended to evoke fairytale book illustrations, and the costumes were designed by a girl not much older than your students (13-years-old).

To create *Hansel and Gretel*, we took the 2 ½ hour opera and condensed it to the approx. 35 min performance you are seeing today! This means that we had to leave certain characters and plot elements out of the story. Therefore, when you read the original fairytale (provided at the end of this study guide), we invite you and your students to compare it to opera onstage: What was different? Why do you think these elements were changed? How did your experience of the story change when it was an opera verses a work of literature?



This process of taking one work of art and transforming it into another is called “Adaptation.” This is the process of taking an original work and turning it into a different medium, while maintaining the spirit of the original. Adaptations are important to recognize and understand. Some adaptations are more faithful than others. For example, the *Harry Potter* movies were very faithful to the world of the books when transferring them into the world of cinema. However, some adaptations are less literal and take more liberties with their source material. We hope this performance of *Hansel and Gretel* is a

great opportunity to instill curiosity into your students and fosters conversation about adaptation, music, and theatrical performance.

# Synopsis

## Act 1:

Inside the broom maker's house, Hansel and Gretel dance about avoiding the chores assigned by their mother. Hansel complains of hunger and Gretel shows him milk that is being saved for a special occasion. When their mother returns home, she scolds them, asking why they had gotten such little housework done. Chasing the kids around the house, she spills the milk. Knowing that there will be no supper for her family, she sends the children out into the forest. As the children head off into the forest, Hansel leaves a trail of breadcrumbs so they can find their way back home.

## Act 2:

The children, wandering through the forest, stumble on a patch of strawberries and begin eating. Soon they realize they have eaten all the strawberries and lost their way. Hansel turns to follow the breadcrumb trail home, only to find it has been eaten by birds! Frightened, they begin calling out for their mother and father. Hansel and Gretel recite the lesson that their parents taught them in order to find their inner courage to persevere.



## Act 3:

The next day, Hansel and Gretel awake in the forest, to find a gingerbread house and begin to nibble on the extraordinary sugary structure. As they taste the house, they hear a voice within. The witch appears, captures Hansel and puts him in a cage. In hopes to fatten Hansel up, she prepares ample food for him. Meanwhile, Gretel, using the witch's magic in reverse, frees Hansel from the cage. When the witch asks Gretel to look in the oven, she pretends she does not know how and asks the witch to show her. When the witch peers into the oven, the children push her in and shut the door. Hansel and Gretel have taken control and learned how to work together to free themselves from a terrible situation. They've each grown up a little and make their way back home wiser than before.



# About the Composer

Engelbert Humperdinck (1854 – 1921) was a German composer from the Romantic era, best known for his opera *Hansel and Gretel*.

Humperdinck's musical career started at a very early age when he began taking piano lessons, and produced his first composition at the age of 7. His first attempt at writing music for the stage came when he was just 13 years old when he attempted to compose *singspiel*. At 18, he began taking music classes at a Conservatory where he was awarded the opportunity to move to Munich, Germany to continue his studies.

*Singspiel* is a form of German-language music drama which is now considered a genre of opera. It is characterized by spoken dialogue, which is alternated with ensembles, songs and arias. *Singspiel* plots are generally comic or romantic in nature, and frequently involve elements of magic, fantastical creatures, and comically exaggerated characterizations of good and evil. Not unlike *Hansel and Gretel*!



Humperdinck's musical style was greatly influenced by Richard Wagner. Humperdinck served as Wagner's assistant in Naples, Italy, when he assisted in Wagner's production of *Parsifal*.

In 1890, Engelbert Humperdinck originally composed four songs to accompany a puppet show his nieces were giving him at home. After his sister wrote a libretto, Humperdinck composed a *singspiel* of 16 songs with piano accompaniment which he quickly used to begin working on a complete orchestration. This orchestration turned into *Hansel and Gretel*!

*Hansel and Gretel* premiered in 1893, under the baton of Richard Stauss. Since then, *Hansel and Gretel* has always been Humperdinck's most popular work. The Royal Opera House in London chose it for their first complete radio opera broadcast, and it was the first opera transmitted live from the Metropolitan Opera.

## The Romantic Era:

The Romantic Era was a literary, musical, artistic, and intellectual movement in the late 18th century to mid-19th century. Taking a turn away from the Enlightenment, where emotion was tempered and logic reigned supreme, Romanticism emphasized affect, fantasy, and individualism. In opera, the move from the Enlightenment meant a new emphasis on emotion. Some composers found more expressive techniques to tell their stories (bigger voices, bigger orchestras, more epic narratives), creating more equality between vocal and instrumental elements. In the Romantic Era, the orchestra was the most important part of the opera.

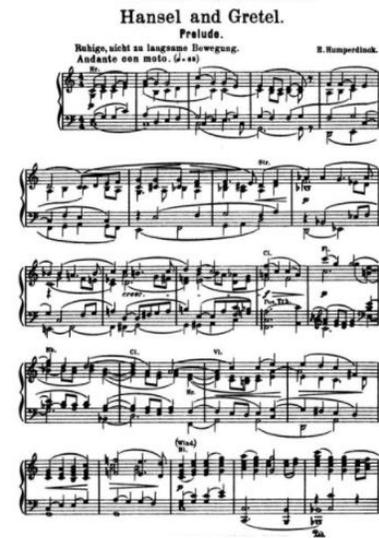
# Prepare for the Opera

## FIFTEEN MINUTES TO PREPARE

You may not have much time to prepare your students for this program. If you have only 15 minutes available in your schedule, please consider the following:

- 1) Ask your students for their ideas about what an opera is. Write OPERA on the board and list the student's answers. Ask the same question once they have seen the show to see if their answers have changed.

- 2) Play the overture of *Hansel and Gretel*. Without telling your students anything about the story or characters of the opera, have them brainstorm how the different sections of the overture made them feel or what it sounded like to them (example: "the music at the beginning sounds serious," "The music in the middle sounds playful," etc.). What is going on in this music? What do you hear that makes you say that?  
**What do they expect to hear in the full performance?**



## THIRTY MINUTES OR MORE TO PREPARE

If you have 30 minutes or more before the performance, please consider some of these additional activities:

- 1) Read the synopsis of the Opera *Hansel and Gretel* on page 5 to your students. Discuss the characters and ask your students how they think these characters will sound, look, behave, etc. What do they think the set will look like? Ask your students to draw what they see during the reading of the synopsis.
- 2) Find a lesson plan in the following pages to complete in your classroom.
  - Music
  - Math
  - Writing
  - Reading
  - Social Studies

# What to Listen For...

There are many things to listen for in *Hansel and Gretel* and you should encourage your students to actively engage in the music. Try not to let them be passive listeners. To help you with this task, here are two things for them to listen for while watching the performance:

## 1) ***Different Voices***

In this opera, you will be introduced to two different voice types (sung by three people!) – soprano and mezzo-soprano. Often, the sounds of their voices portray the personality and emotion of the character. Have your students think about what the witches voice sounds like compared to Hansel or Gretel's respective voices. Does this tell us anything about their characters?

## 2) ***The Power of Musical Suggestion***

Like the human voice, the music played underneath the singers often sets the mood for the scene to come. Can you predict the mood of the scene based on the music you hear before the performers sing? Does the music make you feel happy, excited, anxious, sad, etc.?

- 3) After the performance, ask your students if what they predicted in number 2, matches what they discovered about the performers voices in number 1.

**See how your students answer the following questions:**

- 1) Describe the witch's voice.
  - 2) What was the mood of the scene when the witch entered?
  - 3) How would you describe Hansel's personality?
  - 4) How would you describe Gretel's personality?
- 4) Use the story guide on the following page to continue diving deeper into the story of *Hansel and Gretel*!



# Story Guide

## Hansel and Gretel

Original Story by: The Brothers Grimm

### Morals and Themes

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Responsibility, Growing up, Adventure



### General Comprehension Questions

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- Where does the story take place?
- Who are the different characters?
- Which character is your least favorite? Why?
- Which character is your favorite? Why?
- What are the problems Hansel and Gretel face?
- How do they solve the problems?
- How does the story end?
- What lesson does the story teach you?

### Discussion Questions

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- Why did Hansel and Gretel's mother want to get rid of them? Do you think her plan was fair?
- When Hansel and Gretel were alone in the forest, how do you think they felt?
- What was the first thing Hansel and Gretel did when they saw the Gingerbread House? Do you think that was nice?
- Hansel tried to save his sister by laying a track of breadcrumbs to their house. Gretel though, saved the two of them by killing the witch. Which one do you think was more courageous? Explain your answer.

### Extension Questions

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- What other stories does this remind you of?
- How does this story relate to your own life?
- Write an alternative ending for the story.
- Additionally, write your own version of what happens next!

### Research Activity

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- Use the internet or library to research gingerbread houses
- Can you find any pictures that you really like?
  - What do people use to decorate their houses?
  - Go make your own gingerbread house!

# Fractured Fairytale LESSON PLAN

Subject: English/Writing	Date:
Lesson Title: Fractured Fairytale of Hansel and Gretel	Time:

## **Materials:**

Hansel and Gretel Storybook, paper, pencil, attached worksheet, crayons

## **ARIZONA STATE STANDARDS Writing**

### **STANDARD 1**

#### Anchor Standard

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

### **STANDARD 2**

#### Anchor Standard

- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis or content.

### **STANDARD 3**

#### Anchor Standard

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

### **STANDARD 4**

#### Anchor Standard

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audiences.

## **Objective:**

The students will retell the story of *Hansel and Gretel* by identifying key facts in the story. They will be able to take the key facts combined with their imagination, and create their own version of *Hansel and Gretel*.

## **Process:**

The students will start by reading the fairytale *Hansel and Gretel*, by the Brothers Grimm.

After all students have read the fairytale, begin a discussion with the class about what they just read.

- Describe Hansel and Gretel.
- When does the fairytale take place?
- Why did Hansel and Gretel act the way they did in the beginning of the fairytale?
- How does the story end?

Hand out the Fractured Fairytale of *Hansel and Gretel* worksheet and have students begin answering the prompted questions. Explain that the first column is what actually happened in the story, and the second column is the students own story creation.

As students begin to complete the assignment, they can illustrate the ending of the story they created, or illustrate the entire story on a separate sheet of paper.

The lesson will conclude when the teacher asks some students to share their fractured fairytale with the class.

## **Expand:**

Take this lesson a step further by having your students assemble and illustrate their version of Hansel and Gretel – creating their own book!

Make Your Own  
**Fractured Fairy Tale** of **Hansel and Gretel**

**1** Describe Hansel and Gretel.

Can you change them? How?

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**2** Describe where the fairy tale takes place.

Can you have the story take place somewhere else?  
Where?

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**3** When does the fairy tale take place?

Would you like to set the story in another time?

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**4** Why did Hansel and Gretel act the way they did?

Can you tell the story from another character's point  
of view? Mother, Father, Witch?

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**5** What are the basic parts of the story?  
Hint: Plot, conflict, resolution.

Make all those things different! How different can you make this story?

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**6** Decide on the crisis moment in the fairy tale. Is it when Hansel and Gretel are lost? Is it when they meet the Witch? Why are those actions so important?

Can you change the crisis you decided on and make another one happen that isn't told in the story? Give your reasons for the change and what happens next as a result.

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**7** Try changing the ending of the story!

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Now illustrate your story!



# Hansel and Gretel's Map LESSON PLAN

Subject: Social Studies (Geography)	Date:
Lesson Title: Hansel and Gretel's Map	Time:

## Materials:

Paper, pencils, crayons,  
attached worksheet

## **ARIZONA STATE STANDARDS** STRAND 4: Geography

### **Kindergarten:**

Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms

- PO 2: Construct maps of a familiar place.
- PO 4: Identify land and water on maps, illustrations, images, and globes.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Grade:**

Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms

- PO 3: Construct a map of a familiar place that includes a compass rose, symbols, and key/legend

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:**

Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms

- PO 3: Construct a map of a familiar place that includes a title, compass rose, symbols and key (legend).

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:**

Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms

- PO 3: Construct a map of a familiar place that includes a title, compass rose, symbols and key (legend).

### **4<sup>th</sup> grade:**

Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms

- PO 3: Construct a map of a familiar place that includes a title, compass rose, symbols and key (legend).

**This is a general lesson,  
please adapt based on your grade level!**

### Objective:

Students will be able to read a map and a map key to create their own map of the classroom (or other assigned room).

### Introduction:

- Ask students if they have ever seen a map and if they can share with the class what they are for.
- Ask students what they know about maps.

After reading *Hansel and Gretel*, begin a discussion about Hansel and Gretel getting lost in the woods and the method Hansel uses (bread crumbs) to find their way back home. As part of a class discussion ask:

- Could Hansel and Gretel have benefited from a map in the woods?
- What are some landmarks that would have been on their map?

### Teacher Modeling:

(if applicable) Pass out the "Reading a Map" worksheet and explain what a map key is. Follow the instructions to complete the worksheet.

### Independent Working Time:

- Pass out a blank sheet of paper to each student.
- Students will create a classroom map including a map key.
- Point out landmarks in your classroom that may be important for students to include.
- Encourage students to get up and walk around the classroom if they need to get a better view.
- Based on grade level, have students include a compass rose, symbols, etc.

### Expanding the lesson:

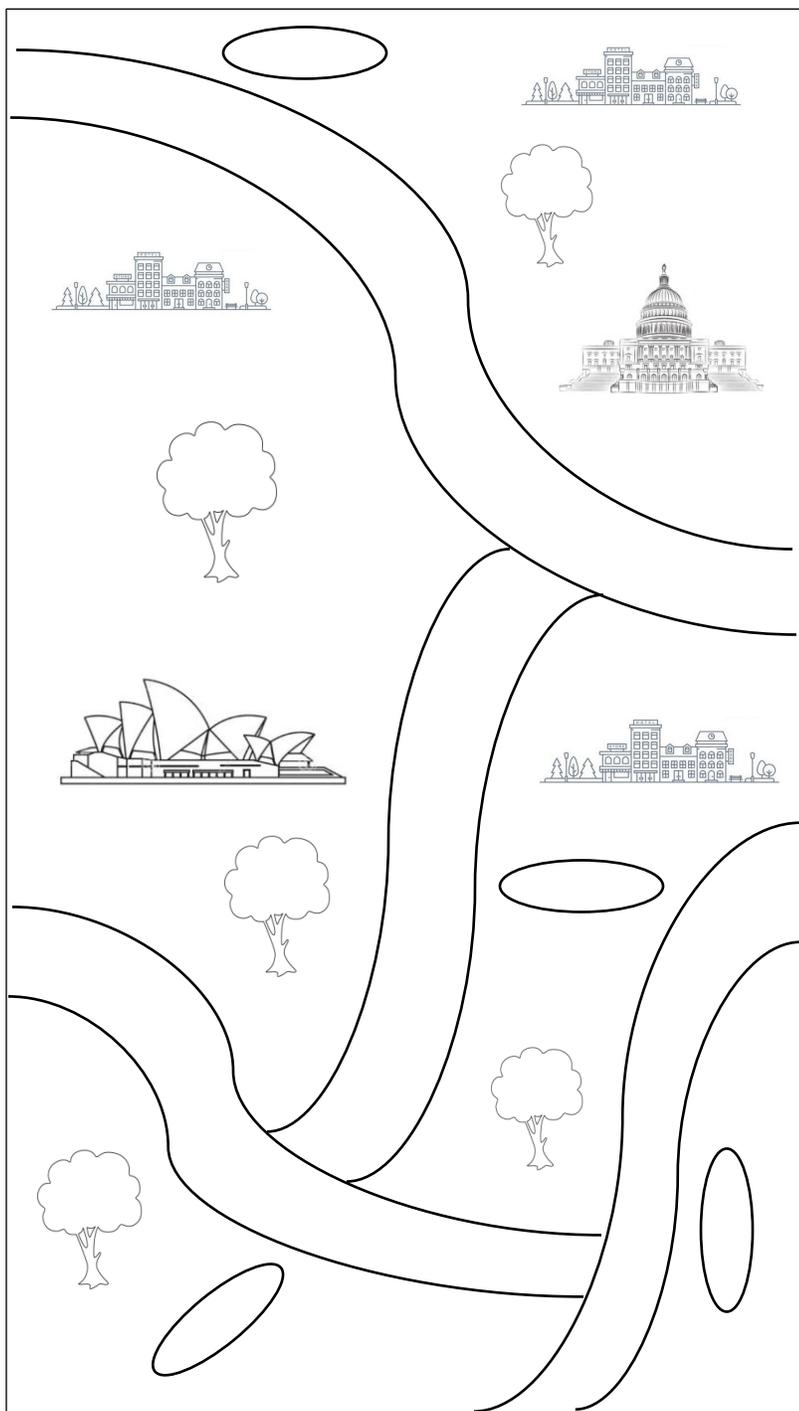
1. Have students make a map of the whole school.
2. **To relate the map back to the book, have students imagine the path that Hansel and Gretel may have taken and have the students create a map for Hansel to find his way back home.**
3. Have students trade maps, pick a point of destination, and use the map to make it to that destination.

# Reading a Map

A map key tells what the symbols on a map stand for.

Use the map key to find the places below.

1. Draw a circle around each city
2. Draw a square around the Opera House
3. Draw an X over the capital
4. Color the parks green
5. Color the lakes blue



## Map Key



Opera House



City



Capital



Park



Lake

# Build Your Own Gingerbread House LESSON PLAN

Subject: Math (Geometry)	Date:
Lesson Title: Build Your Own Gingerbread House	Time:

## **Materials:**

Ruler, Pencil, Scissors, tape or glue, crayons, attached worksheets

## **ARIZONA STATE STANDARDS Math**

### **Geometry:**

#### Kindergarten

- Identify and describe shapes  
K.G.A.2, K.G.A.3

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

- Reason with Shapes and their attributes.  
1.G.A.2, 1.G.A.3

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

- Reason with shapes and their attributes.  
2.G.A.1

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

- Reason with shapes and their attributes  
3.G.A.1

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Draw and identify lines and angles, and classify shapes by properties of their lines and angles.  
4.G.A.1, 4.G.A.2, 4.G.A.3

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Classify two-dimensional figures into categories based on their properties.  
5.G.B.4

**This is a general lesson,  
please adapt based on your grade level!**

### **Objective:**

Students will build a three dimensional gingerbread house.

### **Process:**

The students will start by reading the fairytale "Hansel and Gretel" by the Brothers Grimm (located at the end of this study guide).

The teacher will hand out the provided worksheets to the students.

- Younger grades will use the worksheet with the already constructed shapes.
- Older grades will use the "Draw Your Own Gingerbread House Shapes" worksheet.

The teacher will introduce the assignment, and direct students on how to produce the appropriate shapes. **MAKE SURE ALL PARTS OF THE HOUSE ARE LABELED!**

- For younger grades, supervise as students begin to color and cut out all of their shapes. You will check for understanding by making sure all shapes remain true to their original size.
- For older grades, use the draw your own gingerbread shapes worksheet to draw a sample of number 1 on the board demonstrating how to correctly measure each side of the shape. You will check for understanding by walking around the room making sure all students are producing rectangles, triangles, and squares only.

Once everyone has their shapes build, cut out, and colored, work together as a class to build the gingerbread houses.

- Follow the step-by-step instructions provided on the next page. Continuously check for understanding as students are building the houses.
- Students will first build the 4 walls, attach the roof, place their doors and windows, and for extra credit build and place the chimney.
- After the house is built, allow students the freedom to add in their imagination, drawing pieces of candy, gingerbread men, candy canes, etc.!

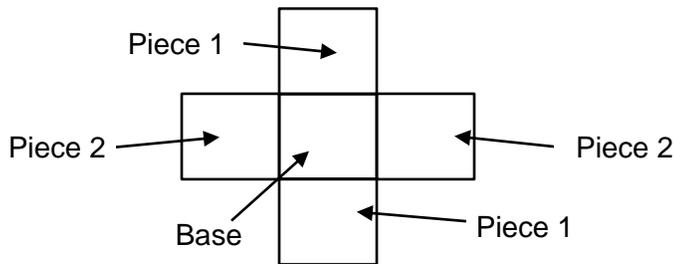
At the conclusion of this lesson, students will have created 5 rectangles, 10 squares, and 2 triangles (without the chimney).

# Build Your Own Gingerbread House

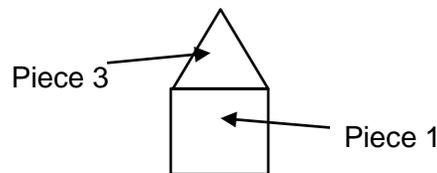
## Step-by-Step Instructions

How to build your gingerbread house:

1. With the **Base** in the center, match both of your "**Piece 2**" squares with the **Piece 2** side on the **Base**.
2. Match 2 of your "**Piece 1**" rectangles with the **Piece 1** side on the **Base**, making sure both sides are the same length. Tape or glue all parts together. When you complete step 1 and 2 you should see something that looks like this:



3. Fold each piece up so you make a 3-D rectangle (**Piece 1** will be touching **Piece 2** etc.).
4. Attach the long side of **Piece 3** (triangle) to **Piece 1** (repeat with both **Piece 3**'s). When finished, the front and back of your gingerbread house will look like this:



5. To form the roof, take the remaining **Piece 1**'s and bisect **Piece 3** by connecting **Piece 1** to the 2 short sides of **Piece 3**. You should have just created a 3-D triangle! About an inch of each **Piece 1** will hang down creating the eaves for your roof. It should look like this:



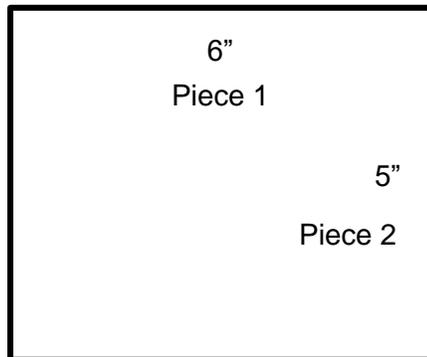
6. See if you can build the chimney with just the shapes provided!



# Draw Your Own Gingerbread House Shapes

Using a ruler, draw and identify all of the shapes by their dimensions given below:

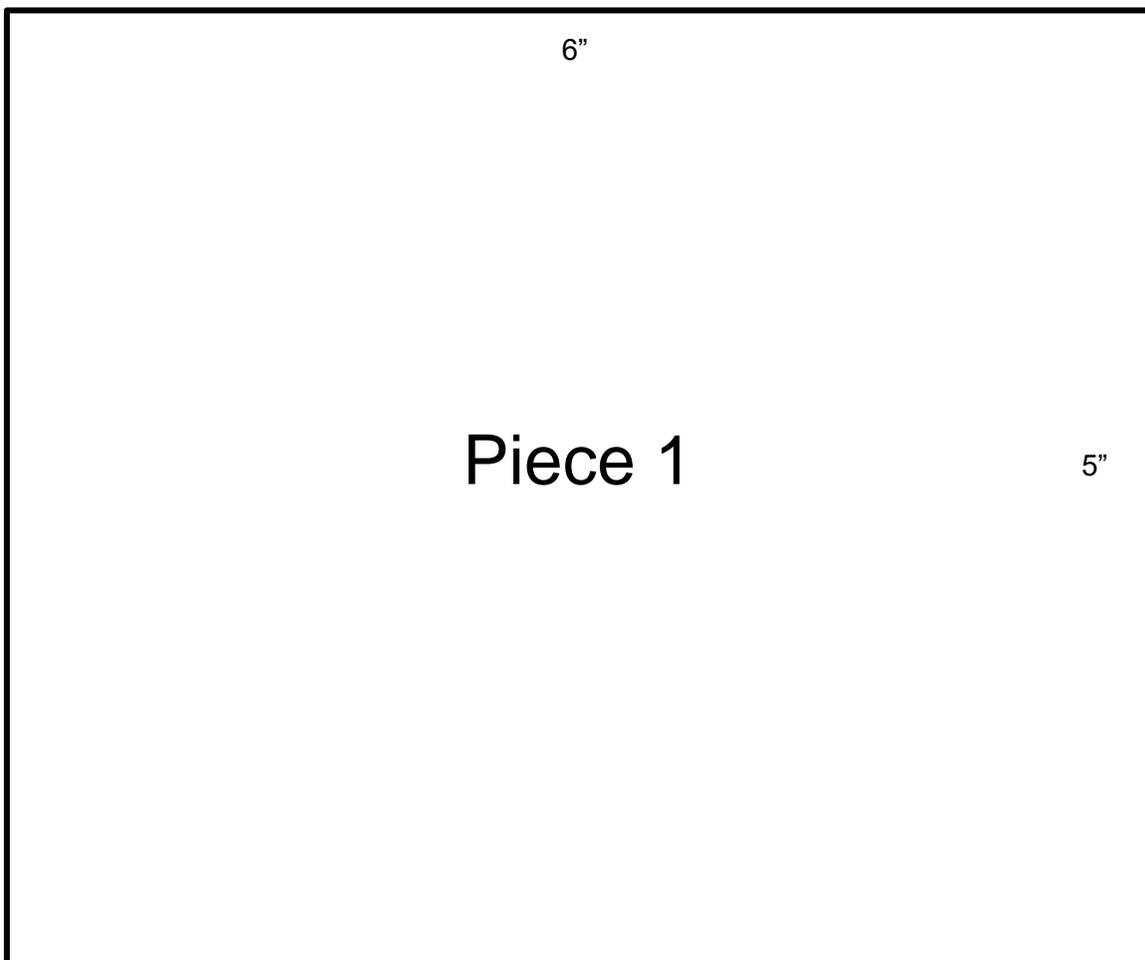
1. Draw "**Piece 1**" four times:
  - Length = 6in, Width = 5in
  - Label each rectangle "**Piece 1**"
2. Draw "**Piece 2**" two times:
  - Length = 5in, Width = 5in
  - Label each square "**Piece 2**"
3. Draw "**Piece 3**" two times:
  - Base = 6in, Side 1 = 5in, Side 2 = 5in
  - Label each triangle with "**Piece 3**"
4. Draw "**Piece 4**" one time:
  - Length = 2 ½ in, Width = 1 ½ in
  - Label Piece 4 **door**
5. Draw "**Piece 5**" eight times:
  - Length = 1 ½ in, Width = 1 ½ in
  - Label Piece 5 **window**
6. Draw the "**Base**" one time:
  - a. Length = 6in, Width = 5in
  - b. On the 6in sides, label them "**Piece 1**"
  - c. On the 5in sides, label them "**Piece 2**"
  - d. Example:



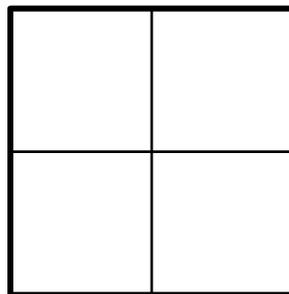
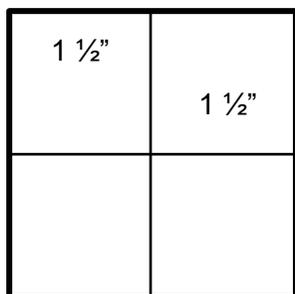
Use the provided cut outs to complete the chimney.

# Build Your Own Gingerbread House

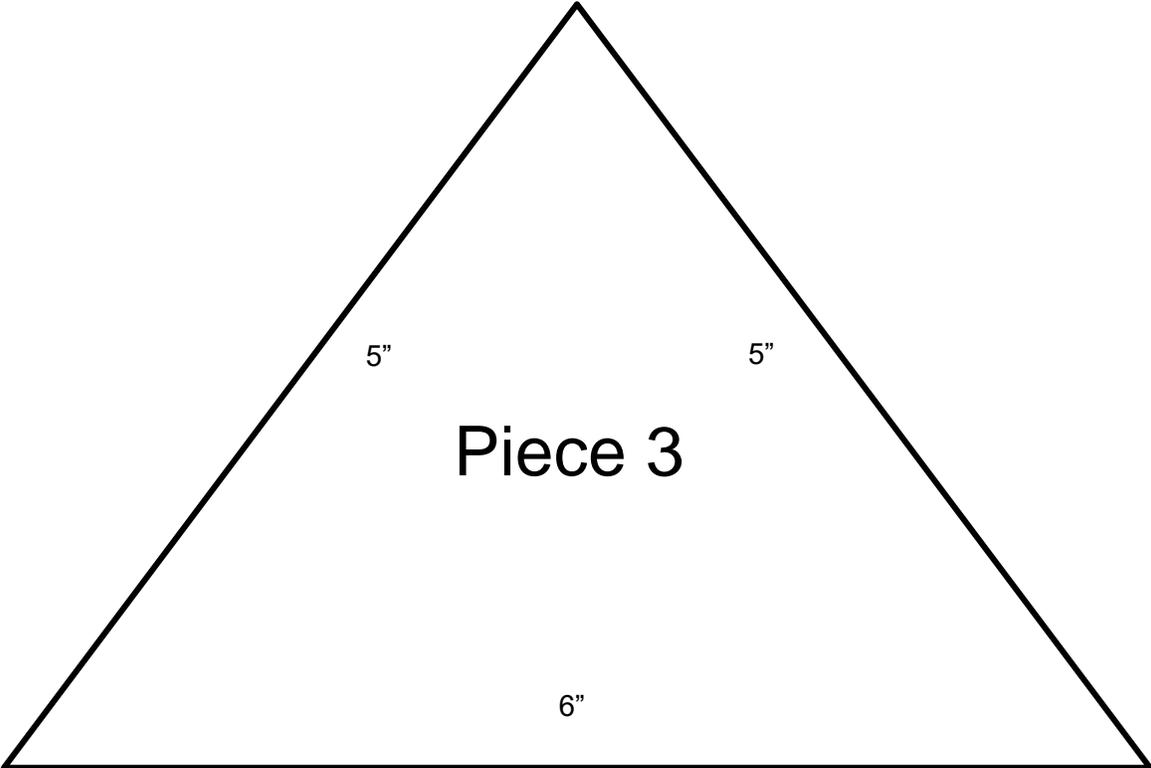
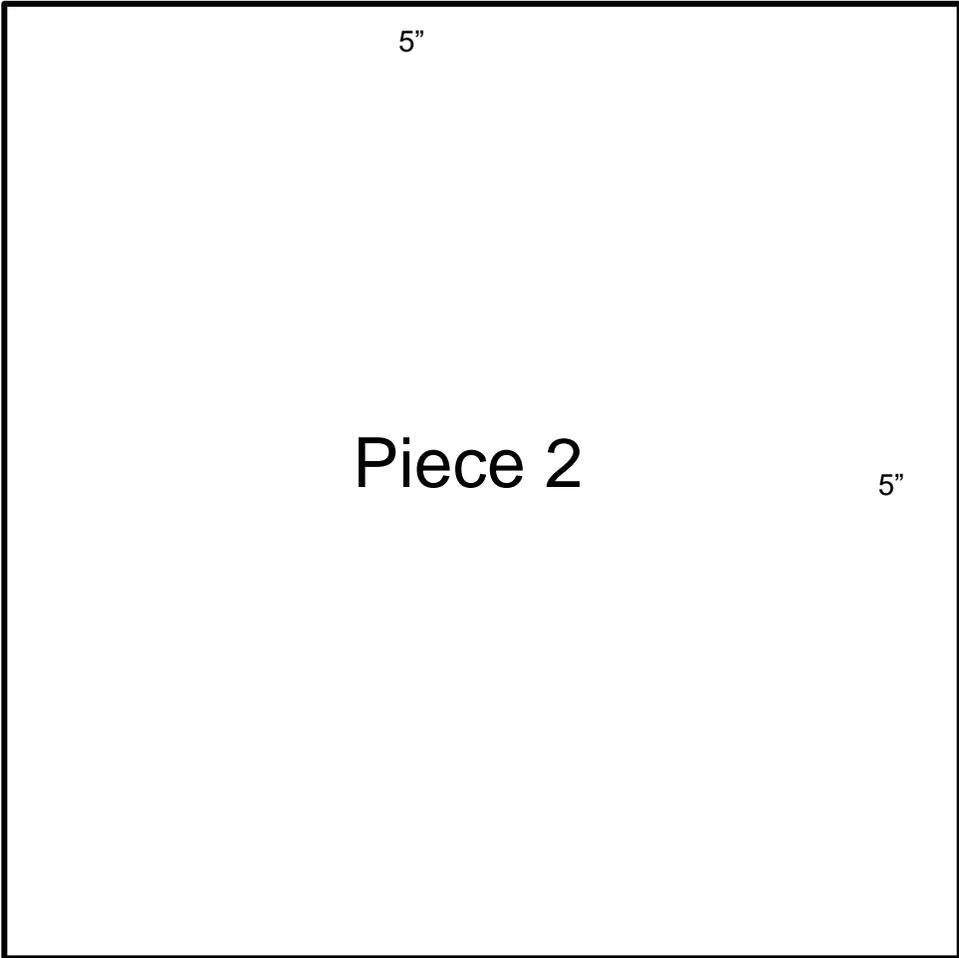
Print and cut out 4 copies of the below rectangle and squares:



Windows:

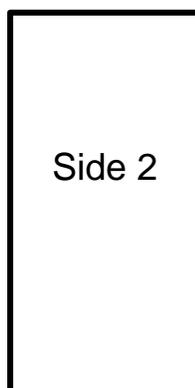
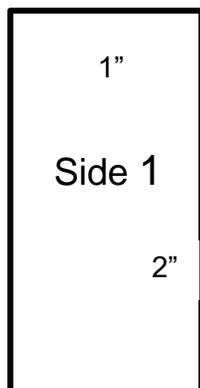
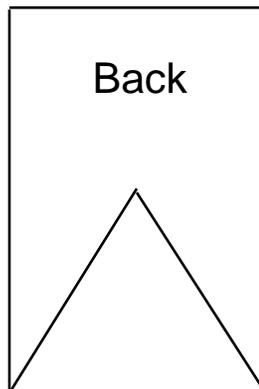
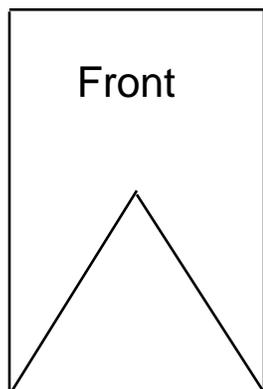


Print and cut out 2 copies of the below Square and Triangle:

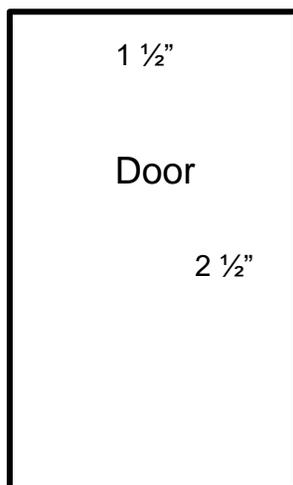


Print the following chimney pieces and door:

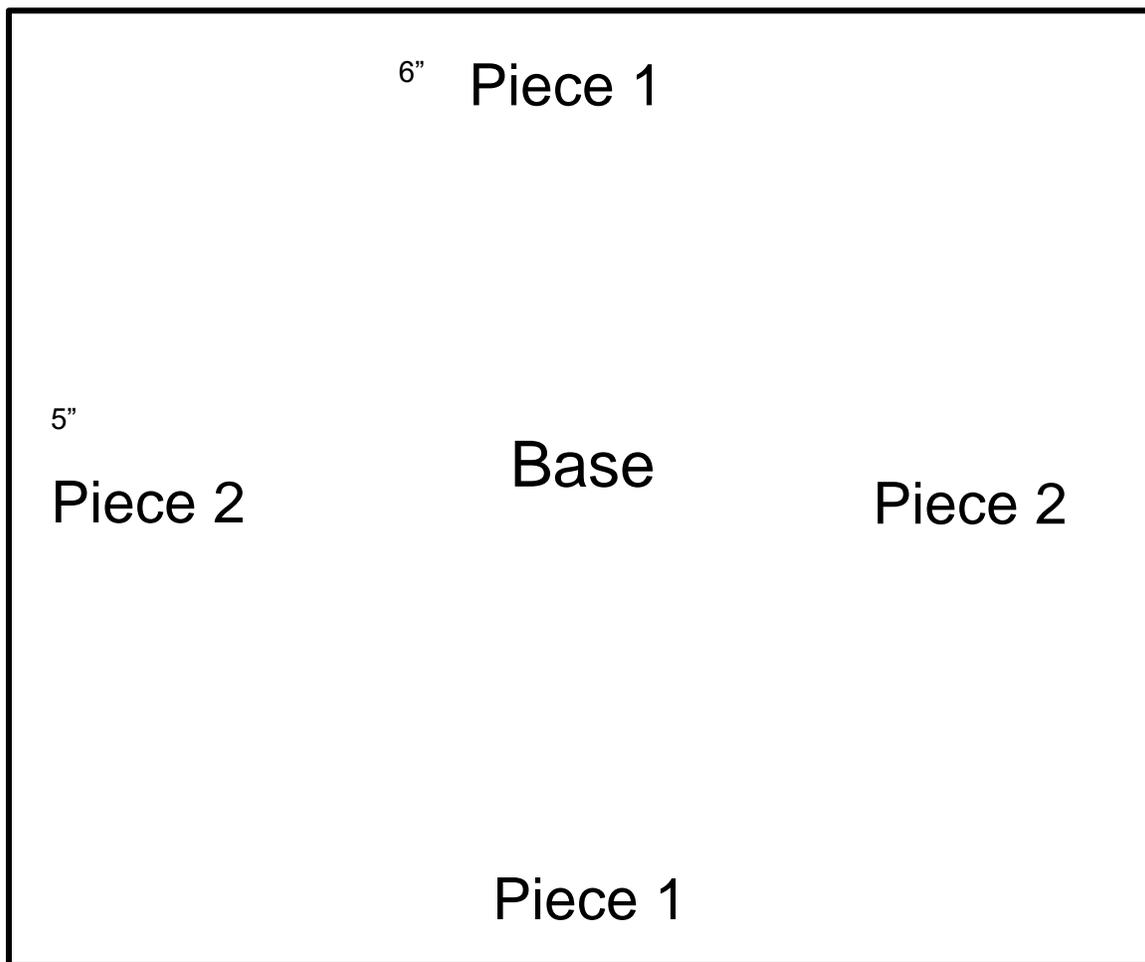
Chimney:



Door:



Print and cut out copy of the Base:



# Hansel and Gretel Storybook

## ARIZONA OPERA



Hard by a great forest dwelt a poor wood-cutter with his wife and his two children. The boy was called Hansel and the girl Gretel. He had little to bite and to break, and once, when great dearth fell on the land, he could no longer procure even daily bread.

Now when he thought over this by night in his bed, and tossed about in his anxiety. He groaned and said to his wife, "What is to become of us? How are we to feed our poor children, when we no longer have anything even for ourselves?"

"I'll tell you what, husband," answered the woman, "early tomorrow morning we will take the children out into the forest to where it is the thickest. There we will light a fire for them, and give each of them one more piece of bread, and then we will go to our work and leave them alone. They will not find the way home again, and we shall be rid of them."

"No, wife," said the man, "I will not do that. How can I bear to leave my children alone in the forest? The wild animals would soon come and tear them to pieces."

"Oh! you fool," said she, "then we must all four die of hunger, you may as well plane the planks for our coffins," and she left him no peace until he consented.

"But I feel very sorry for the poor children, all the same," said the man.

The two children had also not been able to sleep for hunger, and had heard what their step-mother had said to their father. Gretel wept bitter tears, and said to Hansel, "Now all is over with us."

"Be quiet, Gretel," said Hansel, "do not distress yourself, I will soon find a way to help us." And when the old folks had fallen asleep, he got up, put on his little coat, opened the door below, and crept outside.

The moon shone brightly, and the white pebbles which lay in front of the house glittered like real silver pennies. Hansel stooped and stuffed the little pocket of his coat with as many as he could get in. Then he went back and said to Gretel, "Be comforted, dear little sister, and sleep in peace, God will not forsake us," and he lay down again in his bed.

When day dawned, but before the sun had risen, the woman came and awoke the two children, saying, "Get up, you sluggards. We are going into the forest to fetch wood."



She gave each a little piece of bread, and said, "There is something for your dinner, but do not eat it up before then, for you will get nothing else."

Gretel took the bread under her apron, as Hansel had the pebbles in his pocket. Then they all set out together on the way to the forest.

When they had walked a short time, Hansel stood still and peeped back at the house, and did so again and again. His father said, "Hansel, what are you looking at there and staying behind for? Pay attention, and do not forget how to use your legs."

"Ah, father," said Hansel, "I am looking at my little white cat, which is sitting up on the roof, and wants to say good-bye to me."

The wife said, "Fool, that is not your little cat, that is the morning sun which is shining on the chimneys."

Hansel, however, had not been looking back at the cat, but had been constantly throwing one of the white pebble-stones out of his pocket on the road.

When they had reached the middle of the forest, the father said, "Now, children, pile up some wood, and I will light a fire that you may not be cold."

Hansel and Gretel gathered brushwood together, as high as a little hill. The brushwood was lighted, and when the flames were burning very high, the woman said, "Now, children, lay yourselves down by the fire and rest, we will go into the forest and cut some wood. When we have done, we will come back and fetch you away."



Hansel and Gretel sat by the fire, and when noon came, each ate a little piece of bread, and as they heard the strokes of the wood-axe they believed that their father was near. It was not the axe, however, but a branch which he had fastened to a withered tree which the wind was blowing backwards and forwards. And as they had been sitting such a long time, their eyes closed with fatigue, and they fell fast asleep.

When at last they awoke, it was already dark night. Gretel began to cry and said, "How are we to get out of the forest now?"

But Hansel comforted her and said, "Just wait a little, until the moon has risen, and then we will soon find the way." And when the full moon had risen, Hansel took his little sister by the hand, and followed the pebbles which shone like newly-coined silver pieces, and showed them the way.

They walked the whole night long, and by break of day came once more to their father's house. They knocked at the door, and when the woman opened it and saw that it was Hansel and Gretel, she said, "You naughty children, why have you slept so long in the forest? We thought you were never coming back at all."

The father, however, rejoiced, for it had cut him to the heart to leave them behind alone.

Not long afterwards, there was once more great dearth throughout the land, and the children heard their mother saying at night to their father:

"Everything is eaten again, we have one half loaf left, and that is the end. The children must go, we will take them farther into the wood, so that they will not find their way out again. There is no other means of saving ourselves."

The man's heart was heavy, and he thought, "It would be better for you to share the last mouthful with your children." The woman, however, would listen to nothing that he had to say, but scolded and reproached him. He who says a must say b, likewise, and as he had yielded the first time, he had to do so a second time also.



The children, however, were still awake and had heard the conversation. When the old folks were asleep, Hansel again got up, and wanted to go out and pick up pebbles as he had done before, but the woman had locked the door, and Hansel could not get out. Nevertheless he comforted his little sister, and said, "Do not cry, Gretel, go to sleep quietly, the good God will help us."

Early in the morning came the woman, and took the children out of their beds. Their piece of bread was given to them, but it was still smaller than the time before. On the way into the forest Hansel crumbled his in his pocket, and often stood still and threw a morsel on the ground.



"Hansel, why do you stop and look round?" Said the father. "Go on."

"I am looking back at my little pigeon which is sitting on the roof, and wants to say good-bye to me," answered Hansel.

"Fool." Said the woman, "That is not your little pigeon, that is the morning sun that is shining on the chimney."

Hansel, however, little by little, threw all the crumbs on the path. The woman led the children still deeper into the forest, where they had never in their lives been before.

Then a great fire was again made, and the mother said, "Just sit there, you children, and when you are tired you may sleep a little. We are going into the forest to cut wood, and in the evening when we are done, we will come and fetch you away."

When it was noon, Gretel shared her piece of bread with Hansel, who had scattered his by the way. Then they fell asleep and evening passed, but no one came to the poor children.

They did not awake until it was dark night, and Hansel comforted his little sister and said, "Just wait, Gretel, until the moon rises, and then we shall see the crumbs of bread which I have strewn about, they will show us our way home again."



When the moon came they set out, but they found no crumbs, for the many thousands of birds which fly about in the woods and fields had picked them all up. Hansel said to Gretel, "We shall soon find the way."

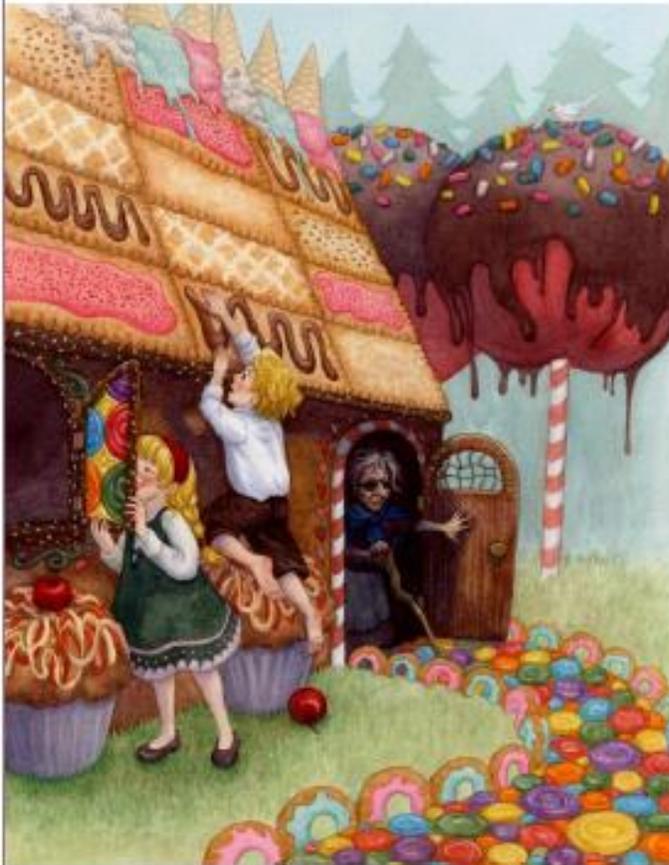
But they did not find it. They walked the whole night and all the next day too from morning till evening, but they did not get out of the forest, and were very hungry, for they had nothing to eat but two or three berries, which grew on the ground.

It was now three mornings since they had left their father's house. They began to walk again, but they always came deeper into the forest, and if help did not come soon, they must die of hunger and weariness. When it was mid-day, they saw a beautiful snow-white bird sitting on a bough, which sang so delightfully that they stood still and listened to it. And when its song was over, it spread its wings and flew away before them, and they followed it until they reached a little house, on the roof of which it alighted. And when they approached the little house they saw that it was built of bread and covered with cakes, but that the windows were of clear sugar.

"We will set to work on that," said Hansel, "and have a good meal. I will eat a bit of the roof, and you Gretel, can eat some of the window, it will taste sweet."

Hansel reached up above, and broke off a little of the roof to try how it tasted, and Gretel leant against the window and nibbled at the panes. Then a soft voice cried from the parlor - "Nibble, nibble, gnaw who is nibbling at my little house?"

The children answered - "The wind, the wind, the heaven-born wind," and went on eating without disturbing themselves. Hansel, who liked the taste of the roof, tore down a great piece of it, and Gretel pushed out the whole of one round window-pane, sat down, and enjoyed herself with it.



Suddenly the door opened, and a woman as old as the hills, who supported herself on crutches, came creeping out. Hansel and Gretel were so terribly frightened that they let fall what they had in their hands.

The old woman, however, nodded her head, and said, "Oh, you dear children, who has brought you here? Do come in, and stay with me. No harm shall happen to you."

She took them both by the hand, and led them into her little house. Then good food was set before them, milk and pancakes, with sugar, apples, and nuts. Afterwards two pretty little beds were covered with clean white linen, and Hansel and Gretel lay down in them, and thought they were in heaven.

The old woman had only pretended to be so kind.

She was in reality a wicked witch, who lay in wait for children, and had only built the little house of bread in order to entice them there. When a child fell into her power, she killed it, cooked and ate it, and that was a feast day with her. Witches have red eyes, and cannot see far, but they have a keen scent like the beasts, and are aware when human beings draw near. When Hansel and Gretel came into her neighborhood, she laughed with malice, and said mockingly, "I have them, they shall not escape me again."

Early in the morning before the children were awake, she was already up, and when she saw both of them sleeping and looking so pretty, with their plump and rosy cheeks, she muttered to herself, that will be a dainty mouthful.

Then she seized Hansel with her shrivelled hand, carried him into a little stable, and locked him in behind a grated door. Scream as he might, it would not help him. Then she went to Gretel, shook her till she awoke, and cried, "Get up, lazy thing, fetch some water, and cook something good for your brother, he is in the stable outside, and is to be made fat. When he is fat, I will eat him."



Gretel began to weep bitterly, but it was all in vain, for she was forced to do what the wicked witch commanded. And now the best food was cooked for poor Hansel, but Gretel got nothing but crab-shells. Every morning the woman crept to the little stable, and cried, "Hansel, stretch out your finger that I may feel if you will soon be fat."

Hansel, however, stretched out a little bone to her, and the old woman, who had dim eyes, could not see it, and thought it was Hansel's finger, and was astonished that there was no way of fattening him.



When four weeks had gone by, and Hansel still remained thin, she was seized with impatience and would not wait any longer.

"Now, then, Gretel," she cried to the girl, "stir yourself, and bring some water. Let Hansel be fat or lean, to-morrow I will kill him, and cook him."

Ah, how the poor little sister did lament when she had to fetch the water, and how her tears did flow down her cheeks. "Dear God, do help us," she cried. "If the wild beasts in the forest had but devoured us, we should at any rate have died together."

"Just keep your noise to yourself," said the old woman, "it won't help you at all."

Early in the morning, Gretel had to go out and hang up the cauldron with the water, and light the fire.

"We will bake first," said the old woman, "I have already heated the oven, and kneaded the dough." She pushed poor Gretel out to the oven, from which flames of fire were already darting. "Creep in," said the witch, "and see if it properly heated, so that we can put the bread in." And once Gretel was inside, she intended to shut the oven and let her bake in it, and then she would eat her, too.

But Gretel saw what she had in mind, and said, "I do not know how I am to do it. How do I get in?"

"Silly goose," said the old woman, "the door is big enough. Just look, I can get in myself." And she crept up and thrust her head into the oven.

Then Gretel gave her a push that drove her far into it, and shut the iron door, and fastened the bolt. Oh. Then she began to howl quite horribly, but Gretel ran away, and the godless witch was miserably burnt to death. Gretel, however, ran like lightning to Hansel, opened his little stable, and cried, "Hansel, we are saved. The old witch is dead."



Then Hansel sprang like a bird from its cage when the door is opened. How they did rejoice and embrace each other, and dance about and kiss each other. And as they had no longer any need to fear her, they went into the witch's house, and in every corner there stood chests full of pearls and jewels.

"These are far better than pebbles." Said Hansel, and thrust into his pockets whatever could be got in.

And Gretel said, "I, too, will take something home with me," and filled her pinafore full.

"But now we must be off," said Hansel, "that we may get out of the witch's forest."

When they had walked for two hours, they came to a great stretch of water.

"We cannot cross," said Hansel, "I see no foot-plank, and no bridge.

"And there is also no ferry," answered Gretel, "but a white duck is swimming there. If I ask her, she will help us over."

Then she cried - "Little duck, little duck, dost thou see,

Hansel and Gretel are waiting for thee.

There's never a plank, or bridge in sight,

take us across on thy back so white."

The duck came to them, and Hansel seated himself on its back, and told his sister to sit by him.

"No," replied Gretel, "that will be too heavy for the little duck. She shall take us across, one after the other."

The good little duck did so, and when they were once safely across and had walked for a short time, the forest seemed to be more and more familiar to them, and at length they saw from afar their father's house.

Then they began to run, rushed into the parlor, and threw themselves round their father's neck. The man had not known one happy hour since he had left the children in the forest. The woman, however, was dead. Gretel emptied her pinafore until pearls and precious stones ran about the room, and Hansel threw one handful after another out of his pocket to add to them.



Then all anxiety was at an end, and they lived together in perfect happiness.

My tale is done, there runs a mouse, whosoever catches it, may make himself a big fur cap out of it.

# Opera Dictionary

What is **opera**? An **opera** is a musical drama or comedy where the actors sing rather than speak their lines. The word “**opera**” derives from the Latin word *opus*, which literally means “a work of art.” Like a play, an **opera** is performed on a stage with singing-actors, scenery, makeup and lighting.

Opera is truly a **multi-disciplinary** art, which means it is a combination of many art forms (singing, orchestral music, theater, visual arts, dance, etc.) and subject areas (history, mythology, literature, etc.). Opera combines these disciplines in a very powerful way to tell a story. Opera can be funny, sad, scary, dramatic, mysterious, fantastical, or any combination of feelings and moods.



The **libretto** (meaning “little book” in Italian) contains all of the words of an opera. A **libretto** is usually shorter than the script for a play because it takes longer to sing lines than to say them, and because music is also a very important part of telling the story of an opera. The person who writes the words for an opera is often a poet or playwright and is called a librettist.

The **composer** writes the music for the opera. All of the music, both vocal (for singers) and orchestral (for instrumentalists) is written in the score which separates lines for each instrument and each singer’s vocal part. The score, as a piece of music, reflects the mood, events and emotions of the characters in the story.

**Characters** are the people in the story. Singers perform the parts of the characters, also called roles.

## *The Performers*

**Soprano**- The highest female voice. She is often the heroine of the opera and often in love with the tenor.



**Mezzo-Soprano**- The lower female voice. The mezzo sound is typically darker and warmer than the soprano. The mezzo usually plays the older female character (like the mother), the bad guy (the witch), a seductress, or a boy. When the mezzo plays a male character, it is called a pants role.

**Tenor**- The highest male voice. He usually plays the hero of the opera and is often in love with the soprano.

**Baritone-** The lower (or middle) male voice. The baritone is often the villain, but can also be the hero who sacrifices himself for the tenor or soprano. In comedies, the baritone is often a prankster. He is usually in love with the soprano but loses her to the tenor.

**Bass-** The lowest male voice. He often plays the wise man or comic buffoon.



**Orchestra-** The group of instrumentalists who accompany the singers. They play under the stage in the orchestra pit where they are less likely to overpower the singers and distract from the action on the stage. However, though they are often not seen, the orchestra is an equal partner in the action of an opera.

**Chorus-** The group of singers who function as a unit onstage. Choruses are usually featured in crowd scenes where they represent the townspeople, partiers, soldiers, etc.

**Dancers-** Dance is often included in opera. They are usually part of big crowd scenes, but can also be featured as soloists in some pieces. Many operas contain short ballet sequences.

#### *Production Team*

**Conductor-** The person in charge of the musical interpretation of the opera. He also guides the orchestra through the opera from the first rehearsal to final performance.



**Director-** Responsible for the overall look or concept of the production. The director determines how the opera will be interpreted and tells everyone on stage when, where, and how to move. Finally, he or she guides the performers on how characters are best presented.

**Choreographer-** Designs and sets the movement of the dancers.

**Costume Designer-** Designs and creates the clothes singers wear to reflect aspects of the character played by the singer. Costumes should reveal a lot about a character. How old they are, what kind of person they are, what time period he or she lives in, etc.

**Scenic Designer-** Creates the visual background and set pieces for the opera. He or she creates small models and detailed blueprints which serve as the “instructions” for building the set.

**Lighting Designer-** Creates the lighting plan that emphasizes the drama of the moment and allows the audience to focus on the action. Lighting design is an important visual element that contributes to the ambience of the stage setting and affects the appearance of people, costumes and props onstage.



**Stage Manager-** Coordinates all of the elements of the show during rehearsal and performance. He or she is responsible for calling cues, scene changes, and organizing the backstage area so that the show runs smoothly and consistently.

**Crew-** This group of professionals is responsible for setting up and running all of the equipment for a performance, including changing the scenery, costumes, and props. They also open and close the curtain, operate trapdoors, run sound effects, and run quick costume changes.

*What makes an opera?*

**Opera** is a **musical** form. The **orchestra** provides the overriding musical texture, while the singers sing and act on the stage.

An **overture** is the piece of music played by the orchestra at the beginning of an opera. It usually, but not always, contains some of the musical themes from the opera and sets the mood for what the audience is about to experience.

**Recitative** (re-chi-ta-TEEV)- Sung dialogue that propels the action forward. The singing is generally faster and is composed to sound more like speech.

**Aria-** An extended musical passage sung as a solo. It often explores emotions as a character absorbs, reflects, and makes decisions in the drama.

**Duet-** An extended musical passage for two singers. A **trio** is for three singers and a **quartet** is a piece for four singers.

**Ensemble-** An extended musical passage for more than four voices. Often, each character is singing different words at the same time, and ensembles tend to occur at the most pivotal point in the drama or the end of an act.

**Supertitles-** Since operas are most often performed in the language in which they were composed, most opera productions have translations above the stage where a translation is projected for the audience to read.



*Other opera terms to know!*

**Bel canto**- Literally meaning “beautiful singing,” this term describes the specific style of vocal production that opera utilizes. It requires great breath control and ease.

**Bravo**- Literally, “brave” or “courageous,” this Italian word is a form of high praise that is shouted at times when applause is appropriate. **Bravo** is shouted when a man has sung thrillingly, and **brava** when a woman has done the same.

**Cadenza**- A brilliant passage in an aria—often improvised by the singer—that showcases the specific skills and strengths of that singer. **Cadenzas** are most often sung by women, although men can perform them as well.

**Diva**- Literally, “goddess,” refers to an important female opera star. The masculine form is **divo**.

**Motif or Leitmotif** (light-mo-teef)- While “leitmotif” is usually used to refer to the musical themes of Wagner, a motif is a recurring musical idea that reveals or recalls an earlier plot point, character, emotion, or idea in an opera. Keep an eye out for music that sounds familiar, it probably means something important!

**Tempo**- This refers to the speed at which music is performed. The conductor is in charge of setting the tempo or timing of an opera.

**Cover/understudy**- This is the person who learns a role, music, and staging just in case the lead cannot perform due to sickness or injury... as we say in the theater, “The show must go on!”



# Opera Term Matching Activity

Match the term on the left with the correct definition on the right:

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1) Soprano _____        | A) The group of instrumentalists who accompany the singers.   |
| 2) Tenor _____          | B) The lower male voice.  |
| 3) Choreographer _____  | C) Sung dialogue that propels the action forward.   |
| 4) Orchestra _____      | D) The music that the composer wrote.   |
| 5) Recitative _____     | E) A piece of music with two singers.   |
| 6) Aria _____           | F) The highest male voice.  |
| 7) Overture _____       | G) The person who creates the vision of the production, sets staging, and guides designers and singers. |
| 8) Score _____          | H) The lower female voice.  |
| 9) Baritone _____       | I) The words that a composer sets to music.   |
| 10) Mezzo-Soprano _____ | J) The highest female voice.  |
| 11) Duet _____          | K) The people who work backstage.   |
| 12) Director _____      | L) An extended musical solo.  |
| 13) Libretto _____      | M) Music at the beginning of an opera.  |
| 14) Crew _____          | N) Designs the dancers' movement.   |