

# WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

## Lesson Plan

### Operas and Overtures

Lesson Plan for *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*  
Grade 3

#### Objective

To help students explore the musical form of an overture, focusing on how this section of instrumental music prepares listeners for the main ideas of the opera that comes after it.

#### Things Needed

- *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* book
- Whiteboard
- Access to the “Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart” web page on the Pop! website: <https://popbooksonline.com/amazing-young-people/wolfgang-amadeus-mozart>

#### Before the Activity

Have students read the *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* book. Pull up the “Explore Links” tab on the Pop! website and click on the “Mozart Music Library” link, which can also be found here: <https://content.thespc.org/music/concert-library/compositions/composer/wolfgang-amadeus-mozart>. Select the “Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*,” but don’t press play yet.

#### Activity

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote many different kinds of music. Ask students to list some of the forms of music he wrote. Write each term and its definition on the whiteboard:

- chamber music: music for small groups of performers
- concerto: music that a solo instrument plays along with an orchestra
- opera: a musical play where most words are sung
- sonata: music made up of several sections played by one instrument
- symphony: music made up of several sections played by an orchestra

An overture is music that is played by an orchestra before an opera, ballet, or play begins. The music has no singers or words. Instead, it sets the mood of the performance. It also introduces some of the themes, or musical ideas, that will be part of the opera’s songs.



Explain that you're about to play the overture for one of Mozart's operas, *The Marriage of Figaro*, for the class. As students listen, ask them to be thinking about what adjectives they would use to describe the music.

After listening to the overture, discuss the following questions as a class:

- What are some adjectives you would use to describe this music? (Possible Answers: fast, cheerful, happy, excited, light, etc.)
- Based on this overture, do you think *The Marriage of Figaro* is a funny opera or a serious opera? (Answer: probably funny)
- Based on this overture, do you think the opera's ending is happy or sad? (Answer: probably happy)
- What are some adjectives you might expect in an overture for a sad, serious opera? (Possible Answers: slow, angry, sad, dramatic, moody, etc.)

### **Evaluation**

Could students recall and define the musical forms mentioned in the book? Could they identify how the overture's sounds related to the ideas in the opera?

### **Standards**

This lesson plan may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational texts, grade 3 (RI 3.4), speaking and listening standards, grade 3 (SL 3.1), and language standards, grade 3 (L 3.1).

