

# TEACHER MATERIALS TO ACCOMPANY “WHO WANTS TO BE AN OPERA STAR?”

Hi teachers! Thanks for introducing your students to the wonderful world of Opera. The following materials are designed to supplement the “Who Wants to be an Opera Star?” elementary school assembly program.



Opera is the art form that combines drama, visual art, dance, orchestra music, and singing. Operas use words, action, and music to tell stories full of conflict and emotion, and they are usually entirely sung.

“Who Wants to be an Opera Star?” uses the framework of a television game show. The assembly runs as a series of questions and challenges, with singers in the role of MC and contestants. Studio audience members (the students) will learn about voice types, arias,

duets, trios, and quartets. Students will also participate in identifying emotions, singing melodies, and clapping rhythms from the world’s favorite operas

## PRE-ASSEMBLY ACTIVITY OPTIONS

- Talk with students about the different kinds of “voices” each of them has:

**Whispering voice**      **Talking voice**  
**Shouting voice**      **Singing voice**

Have students pair up and demonstrate for each other each of these different voices. Ask them to see if their partners can identify which voice they are using. What makes a singing voice different from other types of voices?

A special note about singing voices: Most children have high voices and would be called “sopranos,” but as they get older their voices will change, and many will get deeper. Some singers are comfortable singing very high, others sing better very low – it all depends on how their vocal muscles are built. From highest to lowest, the opera voice types are: soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone, and bass.

Can your students think of a singer with a high voice, a low voice, or a mid-range voice?

- Practice clapping rhythms. You can clap along while singing a favorite song to identify its rhythm, or clap to the rhythm you hear on a recording (be sure to clap

the rhythm of the melody, not just the regular beat), or even make up short rhythmic patterns and see if you can repeat back to each other the exact rhythm.

- Brainstorm a list of what students already know about opera. Ask them to pay attention during the assembly to add to or edit that list later.

## POST-ASSEMBLY ACTIVITY OPTIONS

- Guide your class in a discussion about what they experienced during the assembly:

Ask students to evaluate/give their perceptions of the performers' stage presence and music skills (these skills are part of the Utah Music & Theatre Core Standards).

Ask students to describe their favorite scenes from the assembly, and explain why they liked those scenes the best (these skills are part of the National Standards for Music Education).

Ask students what they learned about opera.

- If your students brainstormed a list about opera before the assembly, go back through the list together, checking for accuracy and adding important elements they hadn't known about before.
- We welcome student and teacher feedback! Find our post-assembly teacher survey at [utahopera.org/education/teachers/opera-in-the-schools-evaluation/](https://utahopera.org/education/teachers/opera-in-the-schools-evaluation/)
- If students or teachers have more questions after the assembly, write to our artists at:

Utah Opera Education  
336 North 400 West  
Salt Lake City, UT 84103

Or visit [utahopera.org/education/students/ask-a-singer-or-pianist](https://utahopera.org/education/students/ask-a-singer-or-pianist). Our artists love receiving fan mail, and will respond to your questions.

## LEARN MORE AND WATCH MORE OPERA

- Learn more about opera singers by watching videos about different voice types at [utahopera.org/education/students/vocal-techniques-for-young-singers](https://utahopera.org/education/students/vocal-techniques-for-young-singers)
- Watch short operas and opera scenes created by Utah Opera at [utahopera.org/education/short-operas](https://utahopera.org/education/short-operas)

## CORE CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS IN MUSIC AND THEATRE

The Utah Opera Resident Artists are inspirational examples of what students can achieve when they master the Utah State Core Standards for Music. The assembly can aid classroom teachers and arts specialists teach both the music and theatre core.

### Music:

- Did the singers know how to start and stop their musical numbers together?
- Did the singers sing with “voices free from strain”?
- Can students recognize and remember times when the singers used musical skills such as different pitches, rhythms, and dynamics (loud or soft)?

### Theatre:

- Did the artists use clear voices when communicating? Did you notice differences in intensity, pitch, rhythm, and volume?
- Each artist played a character in a game show. What did each character want, and what prevented them from getting it? Could you write an inner dialogue for one of these characters?
- What did you think of how the actors moved around the stage (the blocking) for the scenes?
- Explain how this presentation is different from a theatre performance.