Dear Teachers,

Opera Colorado is pleased to provide engaging educational programs and performances for students across Colorado. What follows is a guide that we hope you and your students find useful, as we explore Engelbert Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*. In the spirit of exploration, we have included various lessons that connect *Hansel and Gretel* with different subjects of learning. The lessons reference the new Colorado Department of Education’s Academic Standards: specifically, focusing on the fourth grade expectations. This does not mean, however, that these lessons should be limited to this age group. While we would be very pleased if you used these lessons in the exact format provided, we encourage you to expand, alter, and adapt these lessons so that they best fit your students’ abilities and development. After all, the teacher knows their student’s needs best. We would appreciate your feedback on our teacher evaluation form found at the end of this guide, and we hope that you enjoy all that Opera Colorado has to offer!

thank you!

Opera Colorado makes every effort to ensure that the information provided in this guidebook is as accurate as possible. With the exception of materials used for educational purposes, none of the contents of this guidebook may be reprinted without the permission of Opera Colorado’s Education & Community Programs department. Dictionary definitions were taken from www.Merriam-Webster.com, and unless marked otherwise, educational information was gathered from www.Wikipedia.com. Unless otherwise noted, the materials in the Hansel and Gretel guidebook were developed and compiled by Cherity Koepke and Emma Martin and edited by Jared Guest.
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Hansel and Gretel

Music by Engelbert Humperdineck – Libretto by Adelheid Wette

English libretto by Cherity Koepke
Adapted from the fairytale, Hansel and Gretel, by the Brothers Grimm
Premiered in Weimar, Germany, on December 23, 1893

Please note that voice types for the roles below are reflective of Opera Colorado’s casting, and not that of the original opera.

Gretel...........................................................soprano........................................Laura Soto-Bayomi

Hansel..................................................mezzo soprano.......................................Kira Dills-DeSurra

Witch..................................................tenor.....................................................Thomas Cilluffo

Father..................................................baritone.............................................Isaiah Feken

Sandman..............................................bass baritone.......................................Eric McConnell/
bass......................................................Joshua South

Director: Cherity Koepke
Production Assistant: Jared Guest
Hansel and Gretel live with their father at the edge of the woods. They are supposed to be working on their chores, but instead, they dance around the cottage. When Father comes home, he turns to punish them for their laziness, and in his ranting, accidentally knocks over a jug of milk. Frustrated, he sends them into the woods to pick strawberries.

In the forest, Hansel and Gretel once again play, but then a fight breaks out, and Hansel eats all of the berries. Gretel laments that they will now have to pick twice as many berries, and as night falls, they begin to see strange shapes and lights. Gretel cries out for her parents, and the Sandman appears to put the children to sleep. They sing a prayer asking the angels to protect them and fall asleep in the forest.

The next morning, a beautiful gingerbread house appears in the forest, and the children begin to eat the home, believing it to be the house of their dream angels. As they eat, they hear a strange voice from inside the house. Nevertheless, both children convince themselves that it is only the wind. Soon, however, they find that they are not alone, and the horrible witch grabs them and reveals that she will eat them. The witch freezes Gretel with a spell and leads Hansel into a cage. After the witch departs, Hansel tells Gretel that he has a plan.

When the Witch returns with a basket of sweets, she orders Hansel to eat and sends Gretel to set the table for supper. As Hansel pretends to sleep, he overhears the Witch reveal her plan to bake and eat Gretel first.

When the Witch wakes Hansel to see how fat he has grown, Hansel tricks the nearly blind witch into thinking that he is still too skinny to eat by presenting her with a thin stick instead of his plump finger. While the Witch feeds Hansel, Gretel grabs the Witch’s magic wand and recites the unfreeze spell. Hearing Gretel mumbling, the Witch asks her what she has said, but Gretel merely replies that Hansel will never get fat, which angers the Witch. The Witch then goes to check the oven, and Hansel warns Gretel to be careful. The Witch then calls Gretel over to check the oven, but Gretel pretends not to understand her. Annoyed, the Witch sticks her own head into the oven unaware of the fact that Hansel has crept out of his cage. Hansel and Gretel shove the Witch into the oven; bang the door shut; and rush from the house. The children are saved!

Father is heard in the distance sadly calling for Hansel and Gretel. When he arrives, Hansel and Gretel rush into his arms. Safe at last, the children give thanks to their good fortune and family.
Engelbert Humperdinck was born on September 1, 1854, in Siegburg, Germany. Although his parents encouraged him to become an architect, composer Ferdinand Hiller advised him to pursue the study of music after hearing a composition that Humperdinck had written for a class play.

At the age of 25, Humperdinck won the coveted Mendelssohn prize, which enabled him to study in Italy. While in Italy, he met the aging Richard Wagner, who affectionately took the young composer under his wing, calling him Humpchen or “Little Hump”, indulging in the German fondness for nicknames. Humperdinck assisted his mentor in the preparation of the first performance of Parsifal in Bayreuth, and the two became fast friends. More prize money enabled Humperdinck to continue to travel in Italy and also in France and Spain, where he eventually taught at the Barcelona Conservatory.

Returning to Germany at the end of 1887, Humperdinck began composing the music for Hansel and Gretel at the request of his sister, Adelheid Wette. The composition originally involved four folksongs, but Humperdinck received such enthusiastic support from his family that he turned Hansel and Gretel into a full-fledged opera. Although the work had a slow start, it grew quickly in popularity. Humperdinck came to America for the premiere at the Metropolitan Opera, but his failing health made a return trip to Germany imperative.

Once home again, he decided to devote himself completely to composition, but nothing ever matched the intricacies of Hansel and Gretel. It was so successful that Humperdinck was able to retire on the royalties it provided (which was rare!) and devote himself to his family and his art. His last work, a Sonatine in G Major for four violins, was published in 1921. In September of that year, while attending his son’s production of Weber’s Der Freischütz, he suffered the first of what would be two heart attacks in less than 12 hours. He died early in the morning on September 27, 1921.
Adelheid Wette (Humperdinck) was born in Siegburg, Germany, on September 4th, 1858. The younger sister of the composer Engelbert Humperdinck, she contributed much to the family interest in folksong and fairytales, including occasionally writing texts for Humperdinck’s musical settings. Eventually, she married Dr. Hermann Wette, who himself was the author of two folk-like librettos for Arnold Mendelssohn. Adelheid’s own libretto for Humperdinck’s Hänsel und Gretel began in 1890 as a series of folksongs, four of which she asked her brother to set. Her skill in expanding these into a fully-fledged opera, while keeping the text’s unpretentious character, was recognized as an important ingredient in the work’s eventual success. In 1895 she collaborated with Humperdinck on another Grimms’ fairytale, Die sieben Geislein (The Seven Little Goats), but this work remained a series of domestic songs. Wette died in 1916.

There are many women in the opera industry who are currently shaking up the art form, especially when it comes to writing the music and the librettos (text) for a production. Composer Missy Mazzoli comments on the history of women in opera below:

“WOMEN HAVE BEEN NOT ENCOURAGED to be part of this field in a million subtle ways and also in some very obvious ways. When people ask me about being a woman writing opera, the thing that I always try to say is that there is no history, really. The history of women writing opera started, like, five years ago... That said, there is a responsibility there that’s been ignored to seek out these women. And, most important, to give women opportunities that are based on their potential, not on their past experience.”

Do some research! How many operatic works can you find that were written by female composers and/or librettists?
Jacob Ludwig Carl Grimm was born on January 4, 1785 in Hanau, Hesse-Kassel (now Germany). His brother, Wilhelm Carl Grimm, would follow a year later on February 24. The brothers’ father was a lawyer, but, when Jacob was only 11 years old, he died, leaving the family in social poverty.

In 1802, the brothers followed in their father’s footsteps and attended the University of Marburg with the intention of studying law. In 1805, Jacob, with one of his professors, would go to Paris to research medieval legal manuscripts and, over the next several years, would work in different capacities for both the Hessian and Napoleonic governments. Wilhelm, meanwhile, would fall sick and be unable to take a job until 1814, when he became the secretary at the Elector’s library in Kassel. Jacob joined him there in 1816.

During this time, the brothers had completely left behind law for literary research. They realized that the basis for modern social institutions resided in the past. With this in mind, they published their collection of Germanic folk tales, Kinder und Hausmärchen, in 1812. The collection was an immediate success and would serve as the earliest decisive text on the collection and science of folklore. The brothers would continue to publish collections of folktales, but none of their later compilations would replicate the success of their first collection.

The brothers worked as individuals as well. In 1825, Wilhelm married Dorothea Wild and four years later published his book, Die Deutsche Heldensage, a literary commentary on the German heroic saga. Jacob, in turn, would study philology, specifically looking at issues of grammar. His work would eventually create the basis for modern scientific etymology (the study of the history of words).

In 1829, the brothers would move to the University of Göttingen, after failing to receive a promotion in Kassel. At Göttingen, the brothers would continue their individual work with the publication of Jacob’s Deutsche Mythologie, an exploration of pre-Christian German beliefs and superstitions through folklore, and Wilhelm’s edition of Freidank’s epigrams. However, when Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, would become the king of Hanover, the Grimm brothers, along with five of their colleagues, would protest his repeal of the constitution. As a result, both brothers lost their jobs and Jacob was banished from the country.

In 1840, the brothers moved to Berlin where they would live out the rest of their years in financial security and with the respect of their peers. Berlin would also be the place where the brothers undertook their most ambitious project, the Deutsches Wörterbuch, a dictionary of every German word used in literature for the previous three centuries. Regrettably, however, both brothers would die before its completion. Wilhelm would die on December 16, 1859, and Jacob would die four years later on September 20.
LISTENING activity

Listen to some of the excerpts from *Hansel and Gretel* listed on the next page. Can you recognize these pieces when you watch Opera Colorado’s production sung in English?
**Overture**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Fm60b0X51c

This is the orchestra’s introduction to Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*.

**“Suse, liebe Suse, was raschelt im Stroh”**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFFOAWFdZmU

Hansel and Gretel and doing their chores. Gretel sings to herself as she works.

**“Rallalala, rallalala”**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PBRhS6clxA

This is the Father’s first aria, in which he sings about how hungry he is.

**“Der kleine Sandmann bin ich”**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4JYWL2qGcUM

The Sandman sings Hansel and Gretel to sleep and sprinkles sand in their eyes.

**“Abends, will ich schlafen gehen”**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6Fr3l4fUAo

After Hansel and Gretel find themselves lost in the woods, they sing this evening prayer to calm themselves down and eventually fall asleep.

**“Hurr hopp hopp hopp”**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2QEdEHYiM

The Witch has found Hansel and Gretel near her house and jumps around while casting a spell upon them to imprison them. She then tells them of her life as a witch.

**“Juchhei, nun ist die Hexe tot”**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXinph6RWpC

Hansel and Gretel cleverly trick the Witch to escape her clutches and sing this duet once she is defeated.

**“Rallalala, rallalala, vater, mutter! Kinder, schaut das Wunder an”**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tup8N1-7bJQ

The finale of Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*, in which we see the children triumph and the leitmotif of “Rallalala, rallalala” return.

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**Need some suggestions for recordings to check out?**

Here are our favorites…

![Image of recordings](image_url)
The story of Hansel and Gretel has become very standardized over the years. This holds especially true of the end, when the children defeat the witch and return home to a relieved father and mother. Have your students alter the ending and perform their ending for the class.
Drama & Theater Arts Activity

Colorado Academic Standards Addressed:

1. Create
   a. Create characters from scripts or improvisation using voice, gestures and facial expressions
   b. Create and write simple dramas and scenes
   c. Design a scene through an inventive process and perform the scenes

2. Perform
   a. Participate collaboratively with partners and groups
   b. Demonstrate safe use of voice and body to communicate characters
   c. Define stage direction and body position

3. Critically Respond
   b. Examine character dynamics and relations

The students will be able to:

- Creatively alter the ending to an already known story that takes into account character dynamics and relationships
- Create believable characters through vocal choices and body language
- Choose smart and inventive props and costume pieces for characters
- Improvise dialogue in a short scene
- Demonstrate group problem-solving skills, safety in performance, and respect for other performers

Materials:

- A large amount of space
- Paper and pencil
- Costume pieces and props (You can use any props you have on hand).

Opening: 5 minutes

1. One student tells the story of Hansel and Gretel.
2. Other students identify variations of the tale that they have heard.
3. Teacher points out that all or most variations have a similar ending: the children survive and the witch is defeated.
**Procedures:** 25 minutes

1. Students break into groups of 3-4.
2. Students create an alternate ending to the story.
3. Teacher approves the ending: no ending should be the same and all endings should be reasonably plausible.
4. Students choose the props and costume pieces they need for their performance.
5. Students practice their 2-3 minute scenes.

**Closure:** 15 minutes

1. Students perform their scenes for each other.
2. Students discuss what themes change/remain with alternate endings.
One of the easiest ways to update and keep an opera fresh is to change the set design. Set designs are a result of tradition, expectations of the audience, and the designer’s interpretation of the piece. Take some time to look at different sets from *Hansel and Gretel* and to design your own.
VISUAL ARTS ACTIVITY

Colorado Academic Standards Addressed:

1. Observe and Learn to Comprehend
   a. Determine artistic intent by comparing and contrasting the characteristics and expressive features of art and design
   b. Art articulates and expresses different points of view
   c. People respond to works of art using inference and empathy

2. Envision and Critique to Reflect
   a. The critique process influences the judgment of a piece’s artistic and aesthetic merit
   b. Art and design’s processes and philosophies inform interpretations

3. Invent and Discover to Create
   a. Through media, express and communicate ideas about issues of personal interest
   b. Use material and processes in traditional, unique, and inventive ways

4. Relate and Connect to Transfer
   a. People make personal meaning and infer artistic intent
   b. History and culture interpreted in art

The students will be able to:

- Create a set design that conveys their ideas about the story
- Defend artistic decisions
- Thoughtfully critique the designs of both professional productions and their classmates

Materials:

- Synopsis of *Hansel and Gretel*
- Sketch paper and pencils
- Final draft paper, pencils, and colored pencils
- Set designs from multiple productions of *Hansel and Gretel*
- Overhead projector and screen
Opening: 15 minutes

1. Teacher reads the synopsis for *Hansel and Gretel*
2. Students list the different scenes in the story (e.g. Hansel and Gretel’s house, the forest)
3. Students each sketch a scene from the story

Procedures: 10 minutes

1. Students divide into groups of 3-4
2. Students ask and answer questions about the different decisions they each made in their set design
3. Teacher projects the images of professional sets onto the projection screen
4. In their small groups, Students critique the professional set designs

Closure: 20 minutes

1. Students return to their independent work
2. Students identify three things they would like to add or alter about their personal set designs
3. On the back of the final draft paper students write those three things
4. Students draw their altered set design on the front of the final draft paper
The story of *Hansel and Gretel* is well known, and has been retold many times. As a traditionally rote tale, each person and/or community’s version is slightly different from another’s version. Give your students a chance to hear multiple versions of the story and to create and present their own addition to the fairytale’s development.
LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITY

Colorado Academic Standards Addressed:

1. Oral Expression and Listening
   a. A clear communication plan is necessary to effectively deliver and receive information

3. Writing and Composition
   a. Recursive writing process creates a variety of literary genres for an intended audience
   c. Syntax, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling make writing clearer

The students will be able to:

- Identify similarities and differences between different versions of *Hansel and Gretel*
- Create an original version of the tale and express it in both a written and oral format

Materials:

- *Hansel and Gretel* as told by Sheila Black
- The Metropolitan Opera’s *Book of Opera Stories for Children: Sing Me a Story* by Jane Rosenberg
- Paper and pencil
- Attached Venn-diagram

Opening: 15 minutes

1. Teacher reads *Hansel and Gretel* as told by Sheila Black to Students.
2. Students create Venn-diagrams that compare the story book version of the tale and the operatic version of the tale.
3. Teacher reads the “Hansel and Gretel” story from *The Metropolitan Opera’s Book of Opera Stories for Children: Sing Me a Story* by Jane Rosenberg.
4. Students fill in their Venn-diagram.

Procedures: 30 minutes

1. Students break into pairs.
2. Students write own version of fairytale.
3. Students discuss how they will deliver their version of the story orally.
4. Students practice delivering the oral presentation of the story.

**Closure:** 20 minutes

1. Pairs join other pairs to create groups of four people.
2. Pairs present their story to the other pair in their group.
LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITY
VENN DIAGRAM
Help your students better understand the world of Engelbert Humperdinck, by discussing the geographical area in which Humperdinck was born.
SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY

Colorado Academic Standards Addressed:

1. History
   a. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history.
   b. Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures.

2. Geography
   a. Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world.
   b. Examine places and regions and the connections among them.

The students will be able to:

- Better understand the geographical features of Germany.

Materials:

- Overhead map of Germany
- Pencil and paper

Opening: 15 minutes

1. Break the students into small groups.
2. In their small groups, have students discuss and write down what they already know about the geographical features of Colorado and Germany.
3. As an entire class, students compare and contrast.

Activities/Procedures: 20 minutes

1. Select an appropriate geographical video of Germany
2. Have the class view the video as they take notes.
Closure: 10 minutes

1. Discuss with the class what they found interesting about the video.
2. Discuss with the class if they found any more similarities and/or differences between Colorado and Germany’s geographical features
Map of Colorado
In *Hansel and Gretel*, the Witch is able to create her candy house out of magic. Your students can create their own candy houses as well. Sadly, however, they don’t have magic, and need to use mathematical measurements to plan out their model! Help your students understand the use of real-world area and perimeter functions.
MATH ACTIVITY

Colorado Academic Standards Addressed:

1. Number Sense, Properties, and Operations
   a. Are fluent with basic numeral and symbolic facts and algorithms, are able to select and use appropriate (mental math, paper and pencil, and technology) methods based on an understanding of their efficiency, precision, and transparency.
   b. Understand the structures and properties of our number system. At their most basic level numbers are abstract symbols to represent real-world quantities.
   c. Different representations of real numbers are used in contexts such as measurement, business, and community.

The students will be able to:

- Relate the use of finding certain measurements (area, perimeter, circumference, etc. based on grade and ability) in construction
- Find out how to calculate certain shapes’ measurements

Materials:

- Paper and pencil
- Calculator
- Colored pencils or markers

Opening: 5 Minutes

1. Have students work individually with the required materials.
2. Write the expected standards on the whiteboard. (How many sides must the gingerbread house have, does the house include a yard, how many measurements must be taken?)
3. Inform the students they will have half an hour to complete the assignment.

Activities/Procedures: 30 Minutes

1. Remind the students that a completed house will have a least five measurable features and must be colored.
2. Assist the students if they need help finding a certain complex measurement.
Closure: 10 minutes

1. Let the students present their gingerbread houses to the class.
2. Have the students turn in their project and grade on effort and the accuracy of measurements.
In *Hansel and Gretel*, the children become lost in the forest while picking berries. The forest is filled with all kinds of different flora and fauna that can be categorized depending upon the different regions they inhabit. Your students can imagine themselves lost in the forest. Help them to describe and categorize the different types of life they encounter.
SCIENCE ACTIVITY

Colorado Academic Standards Addressed:

2. Life Science
   
   a. All living things share similar characteristics, but they also have differences that can be described and classified
   
   c. There is interaction and interdependence between and among living and non-living components of systems

The students will be able to:

- Identify the components that make a habitat unique
- Compare and contrast forested habitats of Colorado and Germany

Materials:

- A computer
- Paper and pencil

Opening: 5 minutes

1. Explain to the students what a forest habitat is comprised of and common species found in most forests.
2. Explain to the students that they will be cross-examining the forests of Colorado and Germany.

Activities/Procedures: 20 minutes

1. Have students research similar species of plant and wildlife in the forests of Colorado and Germany.
2. Make sure students take notes in order to discuss after the activity is over.
Closure: 15 minutes

1. Create a group Venn-diagram to display the similarities and differences that you and the students found. Diagram available on page 20.
2. Have students come up one by one and contribute their findings.
LET’S GET artsy

Love to color? Then the next three pages are for you! Go crazy with crayons, colored pencils, and markers to brighten up Hansel and Gretel’s world.
What do Hansel and Gretel find in the woods?

Connect the Dots to find out!
Program Evaluation

Opera Colorado strives to provide quality programs that meet the needs of students and teachers across the state. Please take a few minutes to complete this evaluation and give us feedback on your experience. Opera Colorado is also interested in your students’ response to the programs. We would be happy to receive any letters or artwork from them!

Program:

- Il barbiere di Siviglia (Please circle one: dress rehearsal / matinee)
- I Pagliacci (dress rehearsal)
- Tosca (dress rehearsal)
- Backstage Workshops (Please circle one: Nov. 4 | Nov. 8 | May 6 | May 7 | May 8)
- Touring Opera Performance (Please circle one: Hansel and Gretel / Carmen)
- Storytime Sessions
- In-School Workshop (Please specify: ____________________________)
- Other (Please specify: ________________________________)

Is this your first time participating in Opera Colorado’s Education programs? YES / NO
If YES, what made you participate this year? If NO, how many years have you been a participant?

Were you able to incorporate opera into your curriculum? YES / NO
If YES, please share how. If NO, do you have suggestions?

Please estimate the percentage of your students who had never been exposed to Opera prior to this event:___________

How would you describe your students’ initial attitude toward exposure to Opera?
1........2........3........4........5........6........7
negative/unwilling neutral positive/excited

Did their attitude change after learning more about opera and attending the event? If so, please show on the scale:
1........2........3........4........5........6........7
negative/unwilling neutral positive/excited

Was the Opera Colorado Teacher Guidebook helpful in preparing your students to attend the event?
1........2........3........4........5........6........7
not helpful very helpful

On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate the priority of Arts Education in your school?
1........2........3........4........5........6........7
not important very important

Please share with us any additional comments you have. We especially love stories of how Opera impacted your students. Please use space on back if needed.

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your time and comments!

Name___________________________________________ School/Subject ________________________________
Teacher_____ Administrator_____ Paraprofessional_____ Parent / Chaperone_____ Other_____
My students are: K-2 3-5 6-8 9-12 College