

The Universal Theme of Sacrifice
Written by Olga Bezrukova for L.A. Opera

Duration: This lesson plan can be adjusted for a field-trip or classes spent watching the DVD. Not including the field-trip or watching the DVD, the class will be 50min.

Grade Levels: 9-12

Subjects: Literature, English

Standards:

California State Board of Education Language Arts Content

- Grade 9/10; 2.0 Reading Comprehension (focus on informational materials): Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze the organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced.
- Grade 9/10; 3.0 Literary response analysis: Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They conduct in-depth analyses of recurrent patterns and themes
- Grade 9/10; 3.3 Analyze interactions between main and subordinate characters in literary text (e.g. internal and external conflicts, motivations, relationships, and influences) and how they affect the plot
- Grade 9/10; 3.4 Determine characters traits by what they say about themselves in narration, dialogue, dramatic monologue, soliloquy
- Grade 9/10; 3.5 Compare works that express a universal theme, and provide evidence to support the ideas
- Grade 11/12; 2.0 Students deliver polished formal and extemporaneous presentations that combine traditional rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion and description. Student speaking demonstrates a command of standard American English and the organization and delivery strategies outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0. Using the grades 11/12 speaking strategies outline in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0, students:
- a. Explore the significance of personal experiences, events, conditions, or concerns, using appropriate rhetorical strategies (e.g., narration, description, exposition, persuasion).
 - b. Draw comparisons between the specific incident and broader themes that illustrate the speaker's beliefs or generalizations about life.
 - c. Maintain a balance between describing the incident and relating it to more general, abstract ideas.
- Grade 11/12; 2.4 Deliver oral responses to literature:
- a. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas of literary works (e.g., make assertions about the text that are reasonable and supportable).

- b. Analyze the imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text through the use of rhetorical strategies (e.g., narration, description, persuasion, exposition, a combination of those strategies).
- c. Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text or to other works.
- d. Demonstrate an awareness of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created.
- e. Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.

Procedure:

- 1) The students will watch the opera and fill out Worksheet A and Worksheet B before the class.
- 2) The worksheets A and B will be discussed in class.
- 3) The students will be presented with brainstorming a list of sacrifices they lived through transitioning from middle school to high school, and a similar list of things they will have to sacrifice as they are finishing high school and transitioning into college/adult hood. Worksheet C
- 4) As homework, students will write an essay on a theme of sacrifice by explaining the sacrifices they have experienced coming from middle school to high school. Additionally, the students will explain what kind of sacrifices they are expecting to be making as they are transitioning from high school to college/adult-hood.
- 5) Students will write an essay utilizing narrative, exposition, persuasion and description.

Goals and Objectives:

- 1. Introduce students to the story of "*Jenufa*."
- 2. Let students analyze/compare main characters.
- 3. Discuss the similarities and differences within character analysis.
- 4. Discuss the themes inside the story, including the theme of sacrifice and how it affects the story line.
- 5. Let students branch out their understanding of the theme of sacrifice in other works including books, theater works, film, and television.
- 6. Discuss the relevance of the theme(s) to our time and personal relationships.
- 7. Allow students to write an essay, "Theme of Sacrifice" incorporating the narrative, exposition, persuasion and description.

Assessment:

- 1. Students will be exposed to the story of "*Jenufa*."
- 2. Students will be able to complete Worksheet A and B and discuss these ideas further in class.
- 3. Students will be able to complete Worksheet C in class
- 4. Students will be able to write an essay utilizing narrative, exposition,

5. Students will be able to compare elements of the story and characters to other dramatic works they have experienced/read.
6. Students will be able to write an essay incorporating the narrative, exposition, persuasion and description.

The Universal Theme of Sacrifice
Worksheet A

Compare and contrast the two characters. How does Jenufa strike you? What do you think about the step-mother? Do you see her wanting the best for Jenufa or for the family name? Do you think that in the future Jenufa will become like her step-mother, or is she symbolically a present day “Cinderella?” Do these characters seem real or made up?

Jenufa	vs.	Kostelnicka
<i>Differences</i>	<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Differences</i>

Leos Janáček has two main male characters in the opera of Jenufa. Števa is the young man who took Jenufa’s honor and Laca took her beauty. Compare the two characters. Why do you think Laca ends up with Jenufa?

Laca	vs.	Števa
<i>Differences</i>	<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Differences</i>

**The Universal Theme of Sacrifice
Worksheet B**

Opera *Jenufa* written by Leos Janáček brings out many real elements of life in drama. One of the major elements of the story line is the theme of sacrifice. Do you feel that Kostelnicka is trying to save the family name or Jenufa's honor? Explain why by providing examples from the story?

Can you brainstorm some television shows, films, books, or theater plays that have the theme of sacrifice? For example: Romeo and Juliet, Titanic, the story of Jesus, etc. Use Internet as an asset for ideas.

Title	What is sacrificed/why

The Universal Theme of Sacrifice In Class- Worksheet C

As human beings, we have to deal with sacrifices. Can you brainstorm some sacrifices you had to go through while you were making your transition from middle school to high school?

Brainstorm some of the sacrifices you are expecting while you are transitioning from high school into college/adulthood?

Homework: Pick out several of the sacrifices that you have described and write an essay on the theme of sacrifice utilizing narrative, exposition, persuasion, and description. Make sure your teacher approves your topic. In writing your essay, contrast the sacrifice(s) that you have lived through to the one(s) you are expecting to be making. You can also contrast and compare the similarities/differences between your sacrifices and those of the “Jenufa.”