

Lesson: Exploring Characters and Plot in *Siegfried* and Comparing the myth of
Siegfried to Sleeping Beauty
Written by Olga Bezrukova for L.A. Opera

Duration: 1 lesson/ 50 minutes

Note: This lesson plan can be done in conjunction with a class field trip to *Siegfried*.

Grade Levels: 7 (Easily modified for higher grades)

Subjects: English, Literature

Standards:

California State Board of Education Language Arts Content Standards

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature. They begin to find ways to clarify the ideas and make connections between literary works. The selections in *Recommended Literature, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Structural Features of Literature

3.1 Identify and analyze the characteristics of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction and explain the appropriateness of the literary forms chosen by an author for a specific purpose.

Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.2 Identify the main problem or conflict of the plot and explain how it is resolved.

3.3 Contrast the actions, motives (e.g., loyalty, selfishness, conscientiousness), and appearances of characters in a work of fiction and discuss the importance of the contrasts to the plot or theme.

3.4 Understand that *theme* refers to the meaning or moral of a selection and recognize themes (whether implied or stated directly) in sample works.

3.5 Describe the function and effect of common literary devices (e.g., imagery, metaphor, symbolism).

Literary Criticism

3.6 Evaluate the meaning of archetypal patterns and symbols that are found in myth and tradition by using literature from different eras and cultures.

3.7 Evaluate the author's use of various techniques (e.g., appeal of characters in a picture book, logic and credibility of plots and settings, use of figurative language) to influence readers' perspectives.

1.0 Writing Strategies

Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students' awareness of the audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

Organization and Focus

- 1.1 Create an organizational structure that balances all aspects of the composition and uses effective transitions between sentences to unify important ideas.
- 1.2 Support all statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.
- 1.3 Use strategies of note taking, outlining, and summarizing to impose structure on composition drafts.

Research and Technology

- 1.4 Identify topics; ask and evaluate questions; and develop ideas leading to inquiry, investigation, and research.
- 1.5 Give credit for both quoted and paraphrased information in a bibliography by using a consistent and sanctioned format and methodology for citations.
- 1.6 Create documents by using word-processing skills and publishing programs; develop simple databases and spreadsheets to manage information and prepare reports.

2.4 Write persuasive compositions:

- a. State a clear position or perspective in support of a proposition or proposal.
- b. Describe the points in support of the proposition, employing well-articulated evidence.
- c. Anticipate and address reader concerns and counterarguments.

Lesson

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Classroom Teacher Prep/Materials:

1. Lesson plan may be done in conjunction with a field trip to a performance of *Siegfried*.
2. Copies of Worksheet A, B, C, D
3. Synopsis of *Siegfried* can be found:
<http://www.laopera.com/production/0910/siegfried/synopsis.aspx>
Sleeping Beauty (Disney) can be found: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0053285/synopsis>

Goals and Objectives:

1. Introduce students to the story of *Siegfried*, discuss character development within the story.
2. Compare the characters in *Siegfried* to characters in *Sleeping Beauty*.
3. Guide students through character analysis including motivation and transformation.
4. Students will write argumentative essays using the information discussed in class.

Lesson Plan Description/Procedure:

1. Teacher will distribute copies of synopsis, and have the class reading and discussion.
2. Distribute Worksheet A and B
3. Ask the students to read the story and complete Worksheet A.

4. Teacher will go over Worksheet A with class and guide the students in analyzing the main characters
5. Students will complete Worksheet B.
6. Teacher will explain that each culture has myths and folktales that are passed down with each generation. We often find that variations of these myths and stories exist in different cultures. The story of *Siegfried* can be seen as the German variation of the *Sleeping Beauty*. The teacher will re-cap the synopsis of *Sleeping Beauty*. The class will compare and contrast the main characters in the two stories, Worksheet C.
7. Students will write a focused argumentative essay where they will state whether the story of Siegfried is/or is not like the story of Sleeping Beauty. The students will use the worksheets and information discussed in class to prove their point.
8. Extra Credit Options: RESEARCH another culture's version of a fairytale that is popular in American culture. Compare the *Siegfried/Sleeping Beauty* to the example you choose to research and explain why you believe fairytales/myths/stories are important to our society. (Ex. Of a foreign film with similar story plot to *Sleeping Beauty: Spyashchaya krasavitsa* (Russian))

Assessment:

1. Students will be exposed to the story of "*Siegfried*" and compare that story to the story of *Sleeping Beauty*.
2. Students will be able to identify the storyline and the climax, **Worksheet A.**
3. Students will be able to analyze Character Development & Transformation in **Worksheet B.**
4. Students will be able to complete and discuss **Worksheet C – COMPARING Drama/Character Analysis.**
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 discuss the importance of character development in the plot.
7. Students will be able to write an essay discussing and critiquing the story plot and character analysis/development and comparing it to the *Sleeping Beauty* story, **Worksheet D.**

Worksheet A- Storyline

Identify the beginning, middle and end of the story. Make sure to identify the climax.

Beginning	Where does story take place? Who is there? What is the premise?
Middle	Include the characters, motivations, actions taken and conflicts.
End	Include characters and outcomes.

Identify the climax in the story/When did it happen?

Do elements (drama) of *Siegfried* remind you of any other stories, such as the *Sleeping Beauty* fairytale? How about recurring themes in history; ideas we can relate to in our society today?

Worksheet B: Character Development & Transformation

	Siegfried	Mime	Wanderer/Wotan	Alberich
Beginning of opera	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:
Middle of opera	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:
End of opera	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	DOES NOT APPLY Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:

	Fafner	Brunnhilde	Woodbird	Erda
Beginning of opera	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:
Middle of opera	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:
End of opera	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	DOES NOT APPLY Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:	Goal: _____ Obstacle: _____ Behavior: _____ Evil/good? _____ Additional information:

Discussion: Did the characters stay the same through out the story, or did they go through a transformation? Why do you think it is important to have the development of the character in a story?

Worksheet C-- COMPARING Drama/Character Analysis

In the opera *Siegfried*, we find Siegfried and Brunhilde, opposing characters that add to the drama of the story. Take the two main characters from *Siegfried* and compare them to the two main characters of *Sleeping Beauty*. How do these characteristics add to the drama of the story?

SIEGFRIED	vs.	PRINCE-PHILLIP
<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>

BRUNNHILDE	vs.	SLEEPING BEAUTY-AURORA
<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>

**Question: Do the characters stay the same throughout the story or do they change?
What helps them to change/stay the same?**

Worksheet D: Argumentative Essay

Students Name: _____

It could be argued that the story of *Siegfried* is the Germanic version of a fairytale of *Sleeping Beauty*. In an essay format, state whether you believe that the story of *Siegfried* is/ (or is not) like the story of *Sleeping Beauty*. Choose a scene from the story which illustrates your perspective, use the information in Worksheets A, B, C and excerpts from synopsis in your essay to prove your point. Make sure that you discuss the plot line and character analysis of both stories as a part of your argument. In your essay state if you think it is important for our culture/society to have myth/fairytales and describe why or why not.