

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Arias of Influence

Agrippina Deceives Poppea

POPPEA: Pur al fin se n'andò! Lieto mio core,
oggi vedrai punito il traditore.

Agrippina enters.

POPPEA: O mia liberatrice, quanto a te devo, e quanto
da' tuoi saggi consigli il frutto attendo.

AGRIPPINA: Nascosa, il tutto intesi;
oggi saremo compagne a mirar liete più il nostro che di
Cesare il trionfo. T'abbraccio, amica, e in me tutto confida;
disponi, o cara, del mio cor che t'ama!
(Aside) Felice riuscì l'ordita trama.

POPPEA: Augusta, il mio voler da te dipende.

AGRIPPINA: Quest'alma dal tuo amor legata pende.
Non ho cor che per amarti;
sempre amico a te sarà.
Con sincero e puro affetto
io ti stringo a questo petto;
mai di frodi, inganni, ed arti
sia tra noi l'infedeltà.

Claudio finally left! Oh be happy, my heart:
Today, you'll see Ottone punished for his treachery!

Agrippina, you saved me! I owe you so much, and I'm looking
forward to whatever advice you can give me!

While I was hiding, I heard everything.
Today we'll stick together, and you'll see how we will
triumph—and *not* the emperor. I embrace you, friend.
Confide in me; take advantage of how much I care about you.
My plan is working out perfectly!

Oh, noble empress, my whole happiness depends on you.

And my happiness depends on your friendship.
The only reason I have a heart is so that I can love you.
I will always be here for you.
I will always keep you close
and treat you with sincerity, selflessness, and kindness.
Tricks, games, cruelty, and backstabbing
will never come between us.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Arias of Influence (CONTINUED)

Color Map: “Non ho cor che per amarti”							
COLOR	ITALIAN	ENGLISH					
_____	Instrumental music	Instrumental music					
_____	Non ho cor che per amarti;	I only have a heart so I can love you,					
_____	sempre amico a te sarà.	my heart will always be your friend.					
_____	Con sincero e puro affetto	With sincere and pure affection					
_____	io ti stringo a questo petto;	I will always keep you close					
_____	Mai di frodi, inganni, ed arti	May tricks, games, and artifice					
	sia tra noi l’infedeltà.	never come between us—nor infidelity.					
0:00	0:30	1:00	1:30	2:00	2:30	3:00	3:30
							4:00
							4:30

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Arias of Influence (CONTINUED)

Aria, “Pensieri, voi mi tormentate”

AGRIPPINA: Pensieri, voi mi tormentate.

Ciel, soccorri a' miei disegni!

Il mio figlio fa' che regni,

E voi, Numi, il secondate!

Quel ch'oprai è soggetto a gran periglio.

Creduto Claudio estinto, a Narciso e a Pallante fidai
troppo me stessa. Ottone ha merto, ed ha Poppea
coraggio, s'è scoperto l'inganno, di riparar l'oltraggio.

Ma fra tanti nemici a voi, frodi, or è tempo; deh, non
m'abbandonate!

Pensieri, voi mi tormentate.

Oh thoughts, you torment me.

Oh heaven, help me with my plans!

Make my son ruler, oh gods,

Stay by his side!

My plans are now in grave peril.

Thinking Claudio was dead, I told Narciso and Pallante too
much. Ottone has enough integrity and Poppea has enough
courage that they can fix what I've done if they learn about it.
But among so many enemies, I turn now to you and your tricks,
oh gods. Please do not abandon me!

Oh thoughts, you torment me.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Arias of Influence (CONTINUED)

Color Map: "Pensieri, voi mi tormentate"					
COLOR	ITALIAN	ENGLISH			
_____	Instrumental music	Instrumental music			
_____	Pensieri, voi mi tormentate.	Oh thoughts, you torment me.			
_____	Ciel, soccorri a' miei disegni!	Oh heaven, help me with my plans!			
_____	Il mio figlio fa' che regni,	Make my son ruler, oh gods,			
_____	E voi, Numi, il secondate!	Stay by his side!			
_____	Recitative	Recitative			
0:00	0:45	1:30	2:15	3:00	3:45
				4:30	5:15
					6:00
					6:45

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tell Me What You Feel Like

Practicing Similes

My feet are like ice.

Object 1: _____

Object 2: _____

How Object 2 helps describe Object 1: _____

She ran like lightning.

Object 1: _____

Object 2: _____

How Object 2 helps describe Object 1: _____

The lion's purr was like thunder.

Object 1: _____

Object 2: _____

How Object 2 helps describe Object 1: _____

This cookie is like a rock.

Object 1: _____

Object 2: _____

How Object 2 helps describe Object 1: _____

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tell Me What You Feel Like (CONTINUED)

Practicing Similes

Examples of similes from famous works of literature:

Alice looked up, and there stood the Queen in front of them, with her arms folded, frowning like a thunderstorm.

—Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*, Chapter 9

She wore a gown of shimmering grey silk, and a scarlet rose, fresh-gathered, was pinned at her breast like a splash of blood.

—Rafael Sabatini, *Captain Blood*, Chapter 24

“It was then that I rushed in like a tornado, wasn’t it?” Mr. Darling would say, scorning himself; and indeed he had been like a tornado.

—J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*, Chapter 2

She entered with ungainly struggle like some huge awkward chicken, torn, squawking, out of its coop.

—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Adventure of the Three Gables”

Baskerville shuddered as he looked up the long, dark drive to where the house glimmered like a ghost at the farther end.

—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Chapter 6

The glorious sunlight filled the valley with purple fire. Before him, to left, to right, waving, rolling, sinking, rising, like low swells of a purple sea, stretched the sage.

—Zane Grey, *Riders of the Purple Sage*, Chapter 3

Clinging to one of the greasy rocks and blending almost perfectly with it was a large, unkempt, and exceedingly soiled bird who looked more like a dirty floor mop than anything else.

—Norton Juster, *The Phantom Tollbooth*, Chapter 16

The long vacation saunters on towards term-time,* like an idle river very leisurely strolling down a flat country to the sea.

—Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, Chapter 20

* “Term-time” here means the time when students must return to school for a new term.

Peter Blood pounced like a hawk upon the obvious truth.

—Rafael Sabatini, *Captain Blood*, Chapter 6

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tell Me What You Feel Like (CONTINUED)

“È un foco quel d’amore”

Ottone is not the only one who has noticed Poppea’s beauty—Nerone and Claudio have declared their love for her, as well. Yet Poppea cares nothing for the attentions of the emperor Claudio or the prince Nerone. She loves only the simple soldier Ottone. As she sits at home in Act I, waiting for Ottone’s return, Poppea reflects on what a strange thing love is: Although it can never be explained, it is more powerful (and potentially more destructive) than anything else on earth.

POPPEA: È un foco quel d’amore
che penetra nel core.
Ma come? Non si sa.
S’accende a poco a poco,
ma poi non trova loco,
e consumar ti fa.

The fire of love
is a fire that burns in the heart.
But how does it get there? No one knows.
It starts very slowly,
but then runs out of room,
and consumes you completely.

THIS POEM IN MY OWN WORDS:

THE SIMILE(S):

_____ is compared to _____
_____ is compared to _____

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tell Me What You Feel Like (CONTINUED)

“Ogni vento ch’al porto lo spinga”

At the end of Act II, all of Agrippina’s well-laid plans are crumbling around her: Pallante and Narciso have discovered her two-timing promises, Poppea has figured out that Ottone isn’t actually trying to steal Claudio’s throne, and Ottone has figured out that Agrippina is telling treasonous lies about him. And yet, although Agrippina is ready to apologize and admit her guilt if she absolutely must, she still harbors a faint hope that Nerone will become emperor.

AGRIPPINA: Ogni vento ch’al porto lo spinga,
e benchè fiero minacci tempeste,
l’ampie vele gli spande il nocchier.
Regni il figlio, mia sola lusinga,
sian le stelle in aspetto funeste,
senza pena le guarda il pensier.

No matter how menacing a storm may be,
the sailor caught in the storm will turn his sails
to catch any wind that might push him back to port.
May my son, my only joy, sit on the throne.
Even if the stars may seem foreboding,*
I will look to them without fear.

**Here, Agrippina is looking to the stars for signs of the future.*

THIS POEM IN MY OWN WORDS:

THE SIMILE(S):

_____ is compared to _____
_____ is compared to _____

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tell Me What You Feel Like (CONTINUED)

“Come nube che fugge dal vento”

When Agrippina hears how Poppea tricked Nerone at the beginning of Act III, she is not happy. She chastises Nerone and tells him to refocus on their joint goal: getting him crowned emperor. Nerone replies that he will abandon his love for Poppea immediately.

NERONE: Come nube che fugge dal vento,
abbandono sdegnato quel volto.
Il mio foco nel seno già spento,
di quest'alma già il laccio è disciolto.

Like a cloud that flees the wind,
I, hurt and deceived, will happily forget her face.
The fire in my heart is already smothered,
And the ties that bind me to her are already broken.

THIS POEM IN MY OWN WORDS:

THE SIMILE(S):

_____ is compared to _____
_____ is compared to _____

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tell Me What You Feel Like (CONTINUED)

Writing a Simile Aria

My scene:

What's happening in this scene (in my own words):

How this character is feeling (in a few descriptive words):

Possible similes to illustrate these feelings:

The simile(s) I'm going to use:

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY

21st-Century Rome

Agrippina’s story takes place 2,000 years ago, but Sir David McVicar’s staging updates the action to the 21st century. As you watch the *Live in HD* broadcast, ask yourself: “How can I tell that this story is taking place in the modern world?” In particular, focus on three categories of design—costumes, stage sets, and props—and identify two items from each category that help set the story in the present day. Be prepared to discuss your findings when you return to class.

	WHERE I SAW IT IN THE OPERA:	HOW IT INDICATED “21ST CENTURY” AND HELPED ME UNDERSTAND THE STORY:
Costume 1		
Costume 2		
Stage Set 1		
Stage Set 2		
Prop 1		
Prop 2		

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY

Opera Review: *Agrippina*

Have you ever wanted to be a music and theater critic? Now's your chance!

As you watch *Agrippina*, use the space below to keep track of your thoughts and opinions. What did you like about the performance? What didn't you like? If you were in charge, what might you have done differently? Think carefully about the action, music, and stage design, and rate each of the star singers. Then, after the opera, share your opinions with your friends, classmates, and anyone else who wants to learn more about Handel's opera and this performance at the Met!

THE STARS	STAR POWER	MY COMMENTS
Brenda Rae as Poppea	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joyce DiDonato as Agrippina	☆☆☆☆☆	
Matthew Rose as Claudio	☆☆☆☆☆	
Kate Lindsey as Nerone	☆☆☆☆☆	
Iestyn Davies as Ottone	☆☆☆☆☆	
Conductor Harry Bicket	☆☆☆☆☆	

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN / STAGING
Agrippina learns of Claudio's death MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Agrippina asks Pallante and Narciso for help MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
An announcement: Claudio is alive! MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Ottone is amazed by his good fortune MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Poppea waits for Ottone MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE (CONTINUED)	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN / STAGING
Agrippina tells Poppea some terrible news MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Poppea rebuffs Claudio MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Agrippina and Poppea look forward to Ottone's punishment MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Everyone celebrates Claudio's return MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Ottone can't understand why Claudio is mad at him MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Poppea and Ottone figure out what Agrippina is up to MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Agrippina realizes her plan might not work out, after all MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Nerone and Claudio visit Poppea at her home MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Nerone decides to forget Poppea MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Agrippina tells Claudio he should forgive everyone MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
The grand finale MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆