

ONE OF THE MOST FREQUENTLY PERFORMED AND WIDELY ADORED works in the repertory, Verdi's *Aida* has become the epitome of grand opera. Thanks to a long line of productions that have embraced the opera's epic scale, audiences are by now accustomed to beholding massive architectural sets, live animals (including horses, camels, and even elephants!) on stage, and all the pomp of a bloody conflict between two warring kingdoms. But at the heart of *Aida* is an intimate story of love and loyalty. Acclaimed director Michael Mayer's new production, which premieres at the Met on New Year's Eve, approaches Verdi's Egyptian masterpiece from precisely this perspective.

"*Aida* is a complicated opera, not just because of how big it is, but because the story itself is a love triangle. It's very intimate. It's very small. It's almost a chamber opera at its core," Mayer remarks. "I think for anyone who does *Aida*, the challenge is to navigate between the giant pageantry and the enormity of the sound and scope of it, and then get right back to what is happening between these people." Through innovative use of projections, animations, and nonspeaking actors representing French Egyptologists exploring ancient tombs, this spectacular staging further explores how the historical past comes to life.

This guide approaches *Aida* as an opportunity to consider questions about history, the politics of knowledge, and our own personal conceptions of home, belonging, and obligation. It enables students and educators to gain deeper knowledge of the intellectual and political developments that led to the creation of the opera, as well as its ingenious music and unforgettable characters—all while sparking creativity through activities focused on visual art, craft making, and theatrical improvisation. In so doing, the information on the following pages will make Verdi's epic drama digestible for learners of all ages and backgrounds.

THE WORK

An opera in four acts, sung in Italian

Music by Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni

First performed on December 24, 1871, at the Khedivial Opera House, Cairo, Egypt

PRODUCTION

Michael Mayer Production

Christine Jones Set Designer

Susan Hilferty Costume Designer

Kevin Adams Lighting Designer

59 Productions Projection Design

Oleg Glushkov Choreographer

PERFORMANCE

The Met: Live in HD

January 25, 2025

Encores January 29 and

February 1, 2025

Angel Blue *Aida*

Judit Kutasi Amneris

Piotr Beczala Radamès

Quinn Kelsey Amonasro

Dmitry Belosselskiy Ramfis

Morris Robinson King

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Production sponsored by C. Graham Berwind, III

Aida Educator Guide

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BLUE



KUTASI



BECZALA



KELSEY



BELOSSELSKIY



ROBINSON

The Metropolitan Opera Educator Guides offer a creative, interdisciplinary introduction to opera. Designed to complement existing classroom curricula in music, the humanities, STEM fields, and the arts, these guides will help young viewers confidently engage with opera regardless of their prior experience with the art form.

On the following pages, you'll find an array of materials designed to encourage critical thinking, deepen background knowledge, and empower students to engage with the opera. These materials can be used in classrooms and/or via remote-learning platforms, and they can be mixed and matched to suit your students' individual academic needs.

Above all, this guide is intended to help students explore *Aida* through their own experiences and ideas. The diverse perspectives that your students bring to opera make the art form infinitely richer, and we hope that they will experience opera as a space where their confidence can grow and their curiosity can flourish.

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To access this guide online, including any audio selections and handouts, visit metopera.org/aidaguide.

WHO'S WHO IN AIDA

CHARACTER	PRONUNCIATION	VOICE TYPE	THE LOWDOWN
Aida Princess of Ethiopia	ah-EE-dah	soprano	Imprisoned in Egypt as Amneris's slave, Aida is caught between her love for Radamès, the Egyptian warrior, and her loyalty to her father, the captured Ethiopian king Amonasro.
Amneris Princess of Egypt	ahm-NEHR-ris	mezzo-soprano	Cold and scheming, Amneris is determined to wed Radamès. When she senses his love for Aida, she wields her power to her own benefit—with help from her father, the king of Egypt.
Radamès An Egyptian warrior	rah-dah-MACE	tenor	When Radamès is chosen to lead Egypt's war against Ethiopia, he hopes he will be able to free Aida. His reward for victory in battle, however, is to wed Amneris—igniting a fateful conflict between politics and passion.
Amonasro King of Ethiopia	ah-moh-NAHZ-ro	baritone	Though captured as a prisoner of war, Amonasro is able to convince his daughter Aida—enslaved by the Princess of Egypt—to extract critical information about an impending attack before making his escape.
Ramfis An Egyptian high priest	RAHM-fees	bass	A spiritual and political advisor to Amneris and the King, Ramfis helps oversee the war effort and administers punishment to those found guilty of crimes.
King The King of Egypt	as in English	bass	Amneris's father, the King of Egypt names Radamès the leader of the Egyptian army. Following the victory over the Ethiopians, he declares Radamès his successor and offers him Amneris's hand in marriage.

Synopsis



An early set model for Michael Mayer's new production of *Aida*

ACT I: *Egypt, during the reign of the pharaohs.* At the royal palace in Memphis, the high priest Ramfis tells the warrior Radamès that Ethiopia is preparing another attack against Egypt. Radamès hopes to command the Egyptian army. He is in love with Aida, the Ethiopian slave of Princess Amneris, the King's daughter, and he believes that victory in the war would enable him to free and marry her. But Amneris also loves Radamès and is jealous of Aida, whom she suspects of being her rival for Radamès's affection. A messenger brings news that the Ethiopians are advancing. The King names Radamès to lead the army, and all prepare for war. Left alone, Aida is torn between her love for Radamès and loyalty to her native country, where her father, Amonasro, is king. In the temple of Vulcan, the priests consecrate Radamès to the service of the god Ptah. Ramfis orders Radamès to protect the homeland.

ACT II: Ethiopia has been defeated, and in her chambers, Amneris waits for the triumphant return of Radamès. Alone with Aida, she pretends that Radamès has fallen in battle, then says that he is still alive. Aida's reactions leave no doubt that she loves Radamès. Amneris is certain that she will defeat her rival.

At the city gates, the King and Amneris observe the victory celebrations and praise Radamès's triumph. Soldiers lead in the captured Ethiopians, among



Mirror, ca. 1550–1295 B.C.E., bronze or copper alloy

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, GIFT OF HELEN MILLER GOULD, 1910



Angel Blue as Aida
PAOLA KUDACKI/MET OPERA

them Amonasro, who signals his daughter not to reveal his identity as king. Amonasro's eloquent plea for mercy impresses Radamès, and the warrior asks that the order for the prisoners to be executed be overruled and that they be freed instead. The King grants his request but keeps Amonasro in custody. He declares that as a victor's reward, Radamès will have Amneris's hand in marriage.

ACT III: On the eve of Amneris's wedding, she and Ramfis pray in a temple on the banks of the Nile. Nearby, Aida is waiting for Radamès, lost in thoughts of her homeland. Suddenly, Amonasro appears. Appealing to Aida's sense of duty, he makes her promise to discover from Radamès which route the Egyptian army will take to invade Ethiopia. Amonasro hides as Radamès arrives. He and Aida dream about their future life together, and Aida convinces him to run away with her. Aida asks him about his army's route, and just as he reveals the secret, Amonasro emerges from his hiding place. Realizing what he has done, Radamès is horrified. Aida and Amonasro try to calm him when



Francis Frith, "The Great Pyramid and The Great Sphinx," Giza, 1858

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, GILMAN COLLECTION,
PURCHASE, WILLIAM TALBOTT HILLMAN FOUNDATION
GIFT, 2005

Ramfis and Amneris emerge from the temple. Father and daughter are able to escape, but Radamès surrenders himself to the high priest's guards.

ACT IV: Radamès awaits trial as a traitor, believing Aida to be dead. Amneris summons him, but even after he learns that Aida has survived, he rejects Amneris's offer to save him if he gives up his lover. Brought before the priests, Radamès refuses to answer their accusations, and they condemn him to be buried alive. Amneris begs for mercy, but the judges do not change their sentence.

Aida hides in the vault to share Radamès's fate. They express their love for the last time while Amneris, in the temple above, prays for peace.

An Original Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni

Aida is unusual in Verdi's output for not being derived from a preexisting play, novel, or epic poem. Instead, its scenario was provided by Auguste Mariette, the French Egyptologist and founder of the Egyptian Museum of Cairo, although its fundamental love-triangle structure is common to many operatic plots. Mariette, a member of the Egyptian department of the Musée de Louvre starting in 1849, traveled to Egypt and made several major archeological breakthroughs, ultimately uncovering the Serapeum and Avenue of the Sphinxes in Saqqara. He also published several scholarly volumes, including his *Abydos* of 1869, about the eponymous excavation site; *Aperçu de l'Histoire d'Égypte* (*Survey of the History of Egypt*) of 1874; and *Les Mastabas de l'Ancien Empire* (*The Mastabas of the Old Kingdom*) of 1885. (A "mastaba" is a type of ancient Egyptian tomb.)

Although Mariette is known to have contributed to the plot of *Aida*, experts have debated the precise nature—and scale—of that contribution. Charles Osborne, for example, many decades ago suggested that Mariette was inspired by the work of his own brother, Edouard Mariette, who was drafting a novel based on ancient Egyptian legends titled *La Fiancée du Nil* (*The Bride of the Nile*) at the time that he accompanied Auguste on an expedition to Egypt. He also noted similarities between the story of *Aida* and an earlier libretto by the Italian poet Metastasio called *Nitteti*.

Others have claimed that Mariette merely suggested the idea of the scenario to French impresario Camille du Locle, director of the Opéra-Comique in Paris, who more fully fleshed out the opera's plot before presenting it to the composer. And there is still another competing theory regarding the authorship of *Aida*. Verdi biographer Mary Jane Phillips-Matz argues that Italian composer and librettist Temistocle Solera was the story's true author. Solera had previously collaborated with Verdi on several projects, namely the libretto for *Nabucco* (1842), as well as four other operas. The two had a falling out during the creation of *Attila* (1846) and never formally worked together again, yet Solera remained close to the scene of *Aida*'s genesis. When Verdi refused the offer from Khedive Isma'il Pasha to compose a work for the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Solera accepted the commission and oversaw ensuing festivities. It is quite possible that, acknowledging his fraught relationship with Verdi, Solera crafted the scenario for *Aida*—which itself bears striking similarities to that of *Nabucco*—and entrusted Mariette to present it to the composer.

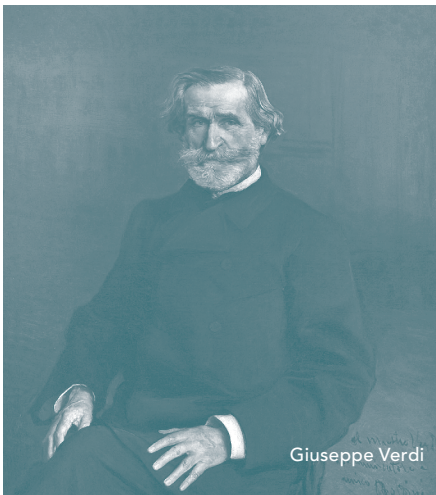
Compared to Verdi's immensely complicated late works *La Forza del Destino* and *Don Carlos*, the structure of *Aida* is simple and direct, and almost classical. After reading and approving Mariette's scenario, Verdi hired the poet Antonio Ghislanzoni to write the verse libretto, with whom he worked closely to direct revisions and oversee textual details. The composer even penned the text for the opera's final duet, "*O terra, addio.*" The story is set "at the time of the Pharaohs" but approaches the historical setting freely and imprecisely. Likewise, Verdi did not try to incorporate any genuinely Egyptian music.

CRITICAL INQUIRY

Aida brings together two vastly different storylines—one concerning the rival nations Egypt and Ethiopia, the other concerning the romantic triangle of Aida, Radamès, and Amneris. When you watch the opera, which of these plots seems more prominent? How are they intertwined? Does the Met's production emphasize one over the other? How so?

The Creation of *Aida*

1798 French military general Napoleon Bonaparte lands in Egypt on July 1. In addition to troops, he brings more than 150 civilian scientists, engineers, and scholars, thus launching the modern field of Egyptology.



Giuseppe Verdi

1813 Giuseppe Verdi is born on October 9 in a small village near Busseto, a market town in the province of Parma. His father and mother are both tradespeople—an innkeeper and an innkeeper's daughter, respectively.

1824 Antonio Ghislanzoni is born on November 25 in Lecco, Lombardy, in northern Italy.

1832 The young Verdi, a promising musician despite a patchy musical education, sits the entrance examination for the Milan Conservatoire; to everyone's surprise, he is rejected. Undeterred, he decides to study privately in Milan.

1839 On November 17, Verdi's first opera, *Oberto*, scores a modest success at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Italy's most famous opera house. But success is bittersweet: Verdi's infant son Icilio had died just weeks before. A few months later, while working on his second opera, a comedy, Verdi's first wife Margherita Barezzi falls ill and dies. The bereft composer is forced to continue working on the comic opera, but it flops miserably.

1842 Verdi finally scores a triumphant success with his biblical opera *Nabucco*, which premieres at La Scala on March 9. Among the cast is soprano Giuseppina Strepponi, who eventually becomes the composer's second wife. Verdi works tirelessly over the next decade, writing at least one opera per year. He will later refer to this period as his "anni di galera," or "galley years."

1853 Two of Verdi's most enduringly popular operas, *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*, premiere within two months of one another. By this point Verdi is widely acknowledged to be the leading Italian composer of his time, and he is courted by opera houses across Italy and Europe.

1858 The French archeologist and Egyptologist Auguste Mariette accepts a position as conservator of monuments for the Egyptian government. His experiences as a researcher and excavator in Egypt later aid him in developing the original story that Verdi will adapt as *Aida*.



Photographic portrait of Auguste Mariette by Nadar, 1865

BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, CABINET DES ESTAMPES

1861 At the culmination of a decades-long project of Italian nationalism known as the Risorgimento, the various independent states on the Italian peninsula are unified into a single Kingdom of Italy. In 1871, the only holdout—the Papal States, ruled by the pope from the city of Rome—is defeated and incorporated into the new country.

1869 The Khedive of Egypt Isma'il Pasha inaugurates the opening of the Suez Canal, after attempting—unsuccessfully—to enlist Verdi to compose a hymn for the occasion. Built in conjunction with the canal, the brand-new Khedivial Opera House in Cairo—the first on the African continent—opens on November 1 with Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Isma'il subsequently approaches Verdi to commission a grand opera to premiere at the new opera house. Verdi accepts after demanding 150,000 francs as payment, four times his fee for *Don Carlos*.

1871 *Aida* is scheduled to premiere in January, but the onset of the Franco-Prussian war delays the delivery of Mariette's costumes and sets from Paris. The opera finally premieres at the Khedivial Opera House on Christmas Eve to tremendous acclaim.



1872 *Aida* has its European premiere at La Scala on February 8, again receiving strong praise from audiences and critics. Verdi considers this performance the opera's true premiere, given that the public was excluded from the Cairo premiere.

1887 *Otello*, Verdi's first new opera in more than 15 years, premieres on February 15 at La Scala. The premiere is an international event, attended by critics and luminaries from around the world, and the opera is immediately hailed as a masterpiece.

1893 Verdi, now 80 years old, astonishes the world once more with another Shakespearean opera, *Falstaff*.

1901 Verdi dies in Milan on January 27 following a stroke. He is buried alongside his wife Giuseppina, who died four years earlier. A month later, Verdi and his wife are reburied in the newly completed retirement home Verdi founded for musicians. A colossal crowd of 300,000 people line the streets, and an 800-strong choir sings the chorus "*Va pensiero*" from *Nabucco*—the opera that launched Verdi's triumphant career more than half a century ago.

Knowledge and Power

Aida is an opera about ancient Egypt written by an Italian composer, but it might be most accurate to describe the work as French. The basic story of the opera was pitched to Verdi by impresario Camille du Locle, director of the Opéra-Comique in Paris, who collaborated on the scenario with Auguste Mariette, a French archeologist who went on to become the founder of the Egyptian Museum of Cairo. But even beyond these immediate sources of French influence, arguably the entire project of studying—and mythologizing—the history and culture of ancient Egypt was inaugurated by France’s most infamous emperor.

In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte launched a secret invasion of Egypt. He hoped, on the one hand, to add the region to his growing empire and exert French influence in the Middle East. On the other, he also aimed to impede—and possibly attack—British trade routes to India. When Bonaparte’s forces landed in Egypt, they included not only soldiers but also an impressive squadron of scholars dubbed “savants.” These architects, engineers, printers, sculptors, botanists, doctors, writers, painters, interpreters, mechanics, and sundry other experts were tasked with documenting Egyptian history in exhaustive detail. The result was the mammoth *Description de l’Égypte* (*The Description of Egypt*), published in nine volumes of text and 11 volumes of plates, or images, between 1809 and 1822. The second edition of the *Description*, published between 1821 and 1828, expanded to 26 volumes.

This vast scholarly undertaking was an intellectual enterprise, but it was also a political one. For Napoleon and his savants, producing knowledge about Egypt—and

Maxime Du Camp, “The Temple of the Sun at Baalbek,” 1850

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, GILMAN COLLECTION,
GIFT OF THE HOWARD GILMAN FOUNDATION, 2005



making that knowledge available to French readers for the first time—was a key strategy for asserting power over the country. Indeed, rendering a foreign culture knowable was another way to make it conquerable. And although Napoleon was ultimately thwarted in his attempts to colonize Egypt by British and Ottoman forces, the legacies of French incursion into the region remained.

Following the failed Egyptian campaign, French and other European scholars and intellectuals continued to be fascinated by the history and culture of ancient Egypt, leading to an uptick in so-called “Egyptomania.” In 1822, the French philologist Jean-François Champollion became the first to decipher the Rosetta Stone, an artifact containing inscriptions in Ancient Greek and Egyptian, a watershed in the translation of Egyptian hieroglyphics. The Rosetta Stone was initially claimed by Napoleon’s forces after its discovery in 1799 but was later surrendered to the British in 1801.

Just a few years later, Champollion and the Italian scholar Ippolito Rosellini conducted research in Egypt, their findings published in *Monuments de l’Égypte et Nubie* (*Monuments of Egypt and Nubia*). Around the same time, the Prussian Karl Richard Lepsius and Englishman Sir John Gardner Wilkinson led their own expeditions. The advent of photography only made ancient artifacts, inscriptions, and monuments even more accessible to a Western reading public. Journalist Maxime Du Camp’s *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie* (*Egypt, Nubia, Palestine, and Syria*) from 1852 included 125 photographs of these locations, many—like the maps, drawings, and surveys in the *Description de l’Égypte*—totally devoid of people, thereby portraying the Middle East as empty and ready for the taking.

Auguste Mariette, who helped craft the story of *Aida*, built his career on the foundations of early French Egyptology. A member of the Egyptian department of the Musée de Louvre starting in 1849, Mariette traveled to Egypt and made several major archeological breakthroughs, ultimately uncovering the Serapeum and Avenue of the Sphinxes in Saqqara. Though he was an expert Egyptologist—Mariette also oversaw the design of the sets and costumes for the original production of *Aida* in Cairo—there is no evidence that his ideas came from anywhere but his own imagination, derived from his general sense of an “ancient Egyptian” aesthetic based on archeological finds from several centuries and dozens of dynasties. There are also deliberate historical inaccuracies in the opera: For instance, Egyptologists in Mariette’s day knew that only male priests, never priestesses, presided in Egyptian temples. *Aida* thus provides much less insight into the worlds of ancient Egypt than it does the desires, misconceptions, and anxieties of Europeans seeking to understand distant cultures.



Maxime Du Camp,
“Westernmost Colossus
of the Temple of Re,”
Abu Simbel, 1850

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COLLECTION, GIFT OF THE HOWARD
GILMAN FOUNDATION, 2005

Call Me Isma'il

Although the Khedivial Opera House in Cairo, Egypt, opened with Verdi's *Rigoletto*, the Khedive of Egypt Isma'il Pasha commissioned the composer shortly thereafter to create a grand new work to premiere at the new opera house—the first such venue on the African continent. The premiere of *Aida* in January 1871 did not take place as planned, as the onset of the Franco-Prussian War prevented the shipment of scenery and costumes from Paris, delaying the premiere nearly an entire year. And much to Verdi's dismay, the world premiere on Christmas Eve 1871 was almost exclusively attended by politicians and dignitaries.

Indeed, the founding of the Cairo opera house was itself a political endeavor. The project was undertaken by Khedive Isma'il Pasha, also known as Isma'il the Magnificent, the viceroy of Egypt and ruler of Sudan. Isma'il was educated in Paris and endeavored to transform Egypt, especially the capital city of Cairo, into a thoroughly modern, cosmopolitan, and westernized center of industry and culture. He largely oversaw the construction and opening of the Suez Canal, connecting the Mediterranean and Red seas. He also built entirely new neighborhoods in Cairo inspired by Georges-Eugène

Postcard of Opera Square in Cairo, 1900

RICE UNIVERSITY, WOODSON RESEARCH CENTER,
TRAVELERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST ARCHIVE





A celebration held by Khedive Isma'il Pasha aboard steamships on the Nile, 1867; photograph by Gustave Le Gray

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, GILMAN COLLECTION, GIFT OF THE HOWARD GILMAN FOUNDATION, 2005

Hausmann's renovation of Paris. Among these was Azbakeya, where the opera house was located directly across from a park designed by French landscaper Barillet Deschamps.

The Khedivial Opera House itself was designed by Italian architect Pietro Avoscani to mimic the renowned Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Italy, where *Aida* would eventually have its European premiere. Built almost exclusively of wood and decorated with gold, the theater had dance studios and rehearsal spaces on the first floor, stored scenery and instruments on the second, and housed costumes and other items on the third. The auditorium seated approximately 850 people.

The venue's first season included 66 performances, drawing crowds from Cairo and nearby Alexandria. Translated libretti in Arabic were made available for operas such as Jacques Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène*, Gioachino Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and Gaetano Donizetti's *La Favorita*. Even students and journalists were able to acquire complimentary tickets.

Unfortunately, the theater's wood construction left it perennially vulnerable to fires. In October 1971, the entire building burned to the ground. A suitable replacement was not begun until 1985 and completed in 1988. The establishment of the new Cairo Opera House was made possible in part by a grant from the government of Japan as agreed upon during a visit by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to that country in 1983. The site of the original Khedivial Opera House is now a multi-story parking garage.

Imperial March

Few operatic melodies are more familiar than the march that accompanies Radamès's victorious army into the city of Thebes (**Track 1**). Certainly, few are simpler. The theme, played initially by a small chorus of three trumpets, comprises only five different pitches. The phrase is heard twice, then the same notes are rearranged into a new melody to form a middle section, before the original phrase recurs one more time.



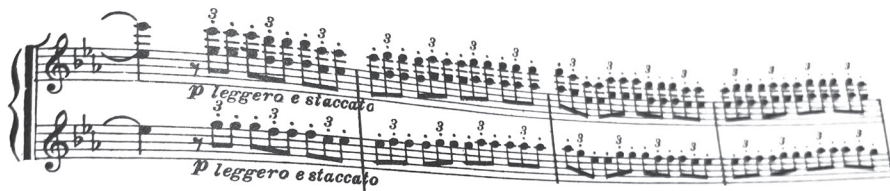
Verdi then repeats this pattern but inserts a jolting modulation from A-flat major to B major—two largely unrelated keys. Here, the main theme is taken up by a separate group of three trumpets as a new cohort of soldiers passes before the king of Egypt. For the conclusion of the march, both sets of trumpets unite, one playing the main melody and the other accompanying in rapid staccato triplets. This section is a prime



example of diegetic music, or music played (and heard) in the opera's narrative world. That is, the characters in *Aida* themselves are listening to the same march as the audience watching the performance.

Notably, the Triumphal March is one of very few sections in which Verdi sought to bring genuine historical effect to *Aida*. Recent archeology had uncovered simple, valveless horns, which prompted Verdi to commission special trumpets in an attempt to recreate the spare, stirring tones the ancient Egyptians might have heard when celebrating a victory. The composer turned out to be more historically accurate than he could have known. Half a century after *Aida*, in 1925, a pair of horns was found in the tomb of King Tutankhamen. One was tuned in A-flat, the other in B—precisely the same two keys Verdi had chosen for his Triumphal March!

The stately, pompous march is followed in quick succession by a celebratory ballet, also presumably a diegetic sequence witnessed by those celebrating Egypt's victory in war (Track 2). Over this section, Verdi cycles through five themes. It begins with rapid, staccato triplets in the flute and piccolo, doubled by the violins, and accompanied



by legato descending lines in the bassoon. A second theme, jaunty and somewhat mischievous, appears in the piccolo and oboe, replete with ornaments, trills, and chromaticism. This section is superseded by a calmer, almost leisurely motif driven by



the violins and violas and, after moving to the woodwinds, punctuated by sforzando attacks in the string section. A fourth theme has the winds and strings trading light,



flighty arpeggios before the orchestra enters as a whole for a final, bombastic fanfare. The ballet ends with a reprise of the second, third, and first themes.



FUN FACT

Aida is the second most performed opera in Met history, with 1,191 performances through the end of the 2022–23 season. Only Puccini's *La Bohème* has been heard more frequently (1,391 times). The photos above show the triumphal scene in the 1910s, 1940s, and 1960s.

No Place Like Home



One of the key emotional moments in the entire opera, Aida's aria "*O patria mia*" (Track 3) is a forlorn farewell to the protagonist's homeland and hope for freedom. At the beginning of Act III, not only have Aida's Ethiopian compatriots lost to Egypt in battle—with her father, the King, taken hostage—but also her beloved Radamès, the Egyptian warrior, has been betrothed to Amneris as a reward for his victory. As a result, he will not be able to save Aida from her enslavement in Egypt, and she—alone on the bank of the Nile—must reconcile herself to her fate.

The aria begins with a legato triplet motif played by the oboe; repeated trills lend the melody an air of exoticism. *Aida* is set in a far-off time and place, but Aida herself is a stranger in a strange land when held captive by the Egyptian Amneris. These ornaments are echoed in the second phrase of the aria when she intones, "*O cieli azurri, o dolci aure native / dove sereno il mio mattin brillò*" ("Oh, blue skies, sweet breezes of my homeland / you glowed in serenity in the morning of my life").



FUN FACT

In 1987, tenor Plácido Domingo led a cast of hundreds of singers, musicians, and extras in a production of *Aida* at the Temple of Luxor in Egypt.

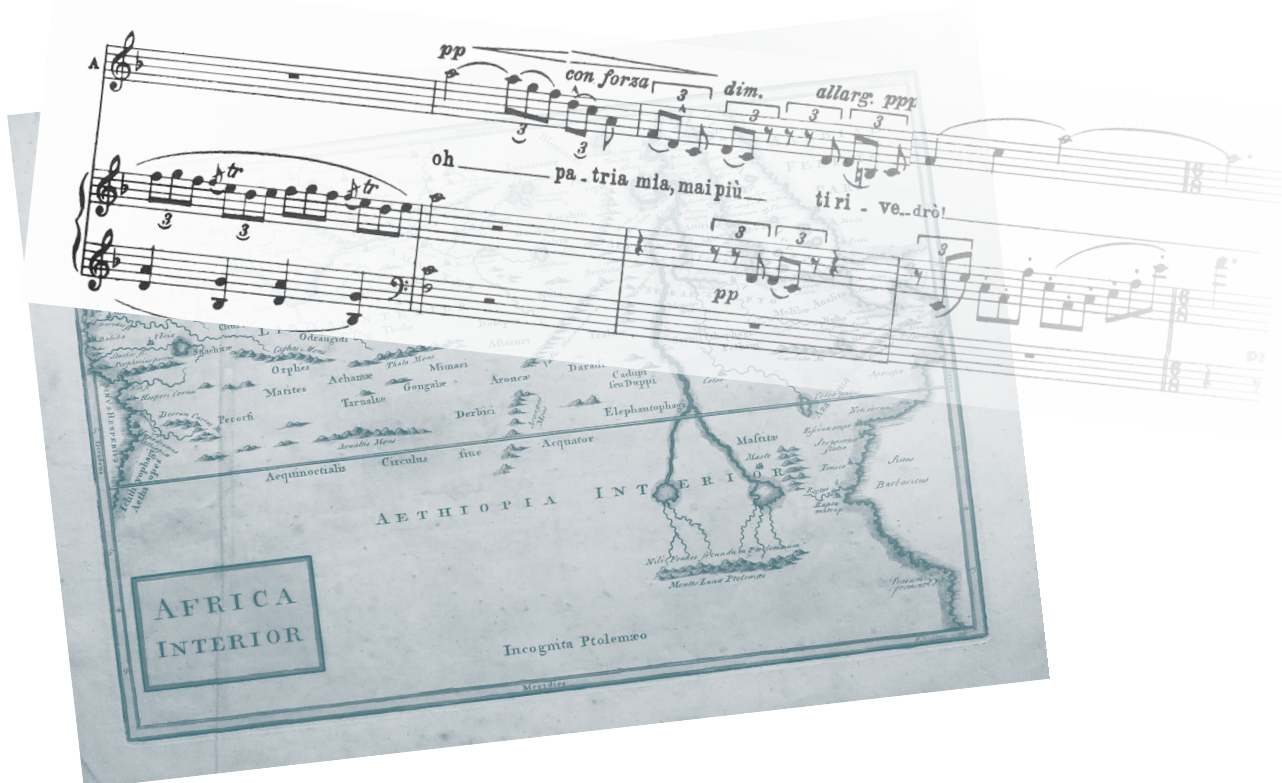
Here appears the main vocal melody of the aria, a slow diatonic descent from F to C. This motif recurs five times throughout “*O patria mia*.” On the third repetition, Verdi substitutes a high A at the end of the phrase before an ornamented arpeggio cascading all the way down to a low C. Indeed, one of the remarkable aspects of the piece is its extreme range—a huge technical challenge for even the most skilled soprano.

Several sections of the aria, namely repetitions of the phrase “*mai più*” (“no longer”), hover around a low E, and there are multiple ascending and descending octave jumps. The final phrase starts on a high A, descends to a low B-natural, and returns to the high A. The emotional apex of the piece arrives on a notoriously exposed high C on the word “*più*” in the aria’s penultimate phrase. Finally, as the singer rises to the note in a gradual crescendo, the orchestral accompaniment drops to *pianissimo* before disappearing almost entirely in Aida’s final phrase, as if leaving her stranded—a musical evocation of the princess’s own lamentable predicament.



Soprano Leontyne Price sang the role of Aida 42 times at the Met between 1961 and 1985.

JAMES HEFFERNAN / MET OPERA



MATERIALS

Handout

COMMON CORE**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-11-12.1**

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

Philosophical Chairs

Philosophical Chairs is an activity designed to foster critical thinking, active inquiry, and respectful dialogue among students. To play, participants agree or disagree with a series of statements, but the game doesn't end there. The most crucial element is what happens next: Participants discuss their point of view and can switch sides if their opinions change during the discussions.

Each topic statement is deliberately open ended yet ties into several of the themes present in *Aida*—including romantic love, personal loyalty and political allegiance, war and power, and jealousy. Offer students a brief overview of the opera's plot, setting, and context, and remind them how to build a safe space for productive conversation. Some of the topics might be confusing or hard—that's okay! As you and your students explore and learn about *Aida*, you can return to these statements: What do they have to do with the opera's story? How might these questions help us explore the opera's story, history, and themes?

A NOTE TO FACILITATORS: Between statements, provide some clarity as to why that statement was chosen. Explain to students where and how each theme shows up in the opera, or invite students to offer their own explanations.

STEP 1. INQUIRE

Distribute the included handout with guidelines and statements, making sure to review the rules of engagement as a group. Next, invite students to read one of the statements—out loud as a class, to themselves, or in small groups. As they read, they should ask themselves:

- Do I understand the statement?
 - If not, what questions might clarify it for me?
- What immediately comes to mind when I read the statement?
 - What is my initial reaction: Do I agree or disagree?
- What led me to that decision?
 - What opinions do I hold about this statement?
 - What life experiences may have led me to think this way?

STEP 2. RESPOND

Read the statements again out loud and ask students to commit to one side. They can agree or disagree, but there is no middle ground. (Many will not be completely comfortable committing to one side over the other—that’s part of the game. It will help foster conversation and debate.)

STEP 3. DISCUSS

Start a conversation! Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- Does anyone feel very strongly either way? Why or why not?
- Does anyone feel conflicted? Why or why not?
- Give voice to what you thought about in the first step:
 - What led me to make my decision?
 - What opinions do I hold with regard to this statement?
 - What life experience may have led me to think this way?
- What might you have not considered that others are now bringing up in the discussion?
- Did any new questions arise during the discussion?

As the conversation continues, students are free to change their minds or develop more nuanced perspectives.

Repeat steps 1 through 3 for each statement.

CRITICAL INQUIRY

The Met’s new production of *Aida*, directed by Michael Mayer, reframes the opera’s narrative through the lens of a team of 19th-century Egyptologists. Does this new perspective change your understanding of the story, its origins, and what it has to say about our relationship with the past and other cultures? How so?

The Show Must Go On

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

World history and culture, music history, improvisation, theater/drama, costume design

MATERIALS

Handouts
Found materials

COMMON CORE

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3

Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5

Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CORE ARTS

TH:Pr4.1.5.b

Use physical choices to create meaning in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Pr4.1.6.a

Identify the essential events in a story or script that make up the dramatic structure in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Pr4.1.HSI.b

Shape character choices using given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

Aida is a story of love, war, and betrayal set against the backdrop of an imagined version of ancient Egypt. An emotional rollercoaster told through Verdi's powerful music and thoughtfully crafted characters, the opera is both grand and intimate in its exploration of political power and private feeling.

In this activity, students will explore the structure of *Aida* and its key players, entertain a historical counterfactual to create quick costumes from found materials, and explore the opera's conclusion through an improvised acting exercise. As a result, they will have a firmer grasp of the opera's central conflicts as well as the historical and aesthetic ramifications of the work's imagined Egyptian setting.

STEP 1. WARM UP

Before students dive into the thrilling story of *Aida*, have them warm up with an improvisational storytelling game.

- First, gather all students in a circle; you will serve as moderator in the center of the circle.
- Provide the setting for the story: Since you are exploring *Aida*, you will use ancient Egypt as your setting.
- Once you have explained the story's setting, point to one person in the circle. This person must begin telling a story set in ancient Egypt. The storyteller must speak until you, the moderator, snap or clap.
- When the snap/clap sounds, the storyteller stops speaking immediately. You will then point to another person in the circle who must continue the story, beginning with the last word spoken by the previous storyteller.
- The new storyteller must then tell the next part of the story until the moderator snaps/claps again and a new storyteller is selected.
- When everyone in the circle has gotten to tell part of the story, you can begin again with a new setting or conclude the warmup exercise.

Have your students discuss as a group how and why they developed their story. How much was based on knowledge of ancient Egypt? What ideas and images come to mind when they imagine this setting? How do biases, myths, and preconceptions inform the way we describe ancient or foreign cultures? What steps could be taken to tell a more accurate or meaningful story?

STEP 2. REVIEW

Now that students have warmed up, they can start to explore the plot and structure of *Aida*. The goal of this exercise is to quickly introduce the first half of the opera in a memorable way using physical improvisation.



A sample of costumes and headresses from past productions of *Aida* at the Met

- Students should still be standing in a circle from the warmup exercise. The center of the circle is the acting space for an improvised performance of the plot of *Aida*.
- Assign one student to serve as the narrator. Using the handout included with this guide, ask the student to read the synopsis of Act I of *Aida*. As the narrator reads from the handout, students on the perimeter of the circle should enter the improvisation space in the middle of the circle and act out what they hear.
- Actors in the center of the circle can play any part that they imagine is in the story. For example, one student must play *Aida*, and another *Radamès*, but someone might also play the throne, or even *Radamès's* sword. Encourage students to get creative about "setting the scene" and using their bodies as inanimate objects or nonhuman figures (i.e., gods or animals)!
- While improvising in the middle of the circle, actors must remain silent so that the narrator's voice can be heard.
- When the narrator has reached the end of the Act I synopsis, ask everyone to return to the perimeter of the circle.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

I Am From ...

Aida, Ethiopian by birth, is forced to become an enemy-slave in the royal household of the Egyptian king. She is utterly alone, forced to stay in Egypt without her kin. Throughout the opera, Aida longs for her homeland, a place where she can be her truest self.

What is a homeland, and why might it be meaningful to us? Is a homeland a physical place or an identity? Can someone's idea of their "homeland" change over time? Ask students to complete the "I am from ..." poem template included with this guide, based on George Ella Lyon's poem "Where I'm From," to learn more about themselves and their memories of home. Encourage students to save their poems and use them as touchstones when they want to connect with what is fundamentally important to them.

- Using the same handout, the narrator should ask the whole group to reflect on the scenes they have just acted out.
- Once the questions for Act I have been answered, repeat the exercise for Act II using a new narrator.

STEP 3. CREATE

Now that students have familiarized themselves with the opera's plot, they can begin to explore its characters further by acting out an afternoon talk show. But before they can begin, students will need to cast the opera and costume its actors.

Recall that the costumes for the planned premiere of *Aida* were held hostage in Paris by the onset of the Franco-Prussian War. Ask students to imagine they are responsible for assembling last-minute costumes so the performance can proceed as planned. Using found materials throughout your classroom (you can set up some helpful items in advance), they should get creative and use whatever is at their disposal to craft original costumes from scratch. For this exercise, students can use the "Cast and Costume" handout included with this guide.

Break students into groups of three to five and assign each group to represent one of the major characters from the opera: Aida, Amneris, Radamès, Amonasro, Ramfis, and the King. You will also need one student from the class to play the talk show host. Distribute the "Cast and Costume" cards for each character to the corresponding group. Set a timer for ten minutes. Students must stop working immediately when the timer sounds.

In their allotted time, each group must:

- Select an actor to play the role of the group's assigned character
- Gather found materials around the classroom to build their character's costume
- Put the character in costume
- Have the talk show host review the plot from the first two acts and think of questions they would like to ask their guests

STEP 4. IMPROVISE

When the timer goes off, it is time for the talk show to begin! To set the scene, place seven chairs in front of the class (one for the host and six for the *Aida* character guests). The host will welcome the audience to their talk show before selecting any character, or multiple characters, from *Aida* that they would like to interview. When they are invited onstage, the actors can speak in the first person as their assigned character.

When the host has interviewed each character, the class can discuss the interviews as a group and guess how the opera will end.

Here are some sample interview questions. For Aida, the host might ask:

- "Tell me about your relationship with Radamès."
- "What do you really think about Amneris?"
- "What do you miss most about your home country?"

For Radamès, the host might ask:

- "You are a famous warrior. What is your weapon of choice?"
- "Are you dating anyone?"
- "What are your honest thoughts about Amneris?"

FUN FACT

Within two years of its Cairo premiere, *Aida* had been staged in Milan, New York City, and Buenos Aires, followed by more than 100 productions over the next decade, including a performance in Australia.

Fragments of Your Imagination

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

World history and culture, visual arts, design, art history, technology, research skills

MATERIALS

Handout
Colored pencils, markers, or crayons
Glue or tape
Plain or construction paper
Computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone (optional)
"Knowledge and Power" Deep Dive (optional)
Illustrated synopsis (optional)

COMMON CORE

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.7

Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.2

Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally

CORE ARTS

VA:Cr1.1.3.a

Elaborate on an imaginative idea.

VA:Cr3.1.3.a

Elaborate visual information by adding details in an artwork to enhance emerging meaning.

VA:Cr1.1.4.a

Brainstorm multiple approaches to a creative art or design problem.

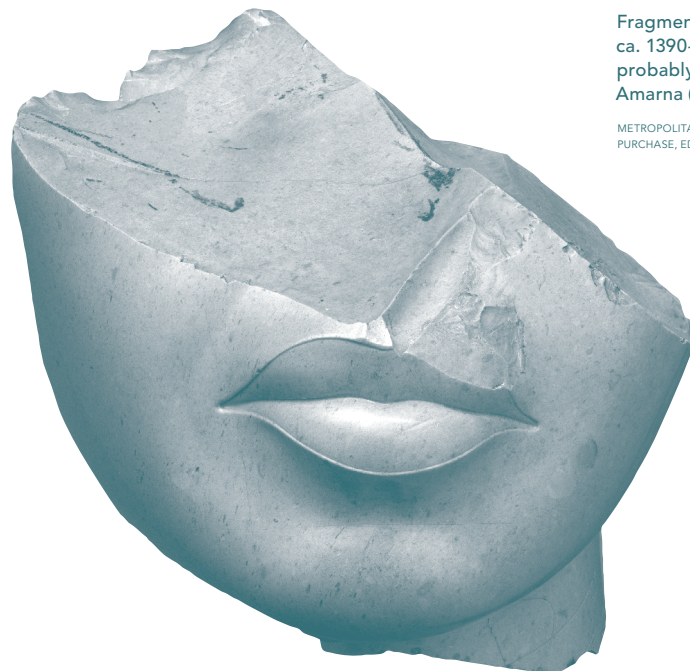
Much of history is educated guesswork, especially in the study of ancient cultures and civilizations. Although we now know much more about the Egyptian past than in Verdi's time, *Aida* was composed when the systematic study of ancient Egypt was less than a century old. The opera, as a result, is not a rigorous depiction of a historical society but rather an imaginative evocation of a particular time and place by a set of artists—namely, Verdi and his collaborators—who had relatively limited knowledge of that history.

Michael Mayer's new production of *Aida* makes this distanced perspective explicit by incorporating two nonspeaking roles, one man and one woman, representing Egyptologists who uncover ancient tombs and envision the action of the opera. In this activity, students will have the chance to encounter ancient Egyptian art, make inferences about its contexts and meanings, and reflect upon how we fill in the gaps of the historical past.

STEP 1. REVIEW

For students who are interested in learning more about the history of ancient Egypt, consider distributing or discussing excerpts from the included Deep Dive essay "Power and Knowledge." It might also be helpful to frame the activity by mentioning that the Met's new production of *Aida* will feature two nonspeaking Egyptologists loosely inspired by Auguste Mariette, who is credited with outlining the story of *Aida*.

Younger students might find it more helpful to review the plot of the opera, either by reading through the synopsis as a group or distributing the illustrated synopsis (metopera.org/aida-illustrated).



Fragment of a Queen's Face, ca. 1390–36 B.C.E., Egypt; probably from Middle Egypt, Amarna (Akhetaten)

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, PURCHASE, EDWARD S. HARKNESS GIFT, 1926

STEP 2. RESEARCH

Ask students to search for ancient Egyptian artwork using an online search engine. They can find paintings, reliefs, or sculptures. Each student should identify one piece of art that they will use for the rest of the activity.

Have each student print out the artwork they have chosen. Then, they should rip or tear pieces off the printout, creating a fragment. Next, divide the class into pairs or groups of three. Within each pair or group, have the students trade fragments. Each student should end up with a different artwork from the one with which they started the activity.

STEP 3. CREATE

Once each student has received their fragment, they can affix it to a piece of plain paper or construction paper using tape or glue. Then, they should use pencils, pens, colored pencils, markers, or crayons to “complete” the fragment as they see fit, filling in gaps and adding to the image wherever possible. They can continue to consult online images of ancient Egyptian artwork to guide their creative decisions.



Relief showing procession of offering bearers, ca. 1961–17 B.C.E., Egypt

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, ROGERS FUND, 1909

STEP 4. REFLECT

After they have finished drawing and coloring their fragments, ask students to complete the handout included with this guide. The worksheet asks them to reflect on broader questions about their creative decision making and how we approach the ancient past. For older students who have studied *Aida* in more depth and have greater familiarity with ancient Egypt, you may want to consider how the opera specifically imagines—or misrepresents—its historical setting.

STEP 5. SHARE

Once everyone has completed their fragments and worksheets, have students volunteer to share their designs, their creative choices, and what they learned from the exercise. Afterward, you can display the fragments and handouts around the room, or convene a gallery walk so students can see and learn from each other’s work.

Philosophical Chairs

Active listening, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue (even when we disagree about something) are learned skills. Everyone can learn them, and no one can perfect them without practice. Philosophical Chairs is designed to help us develop these skills while also learning about the opera.

You might find these statements challenging—and you might find it challenging to talk with someone who has a different answer from your own. That’s okay! Take your time with each statement, embrace uncertainty, and know that changing your mind when you learn new information is a sign of strength, not weakness. Before you begin your discussion, take some time to review the rules of engagement:

Be sure you understand the statement. If something is unclear, ask!

Face each other. Body language helps show that you’re listening carefully and respectfully.

Only one speaker at a time. Everyone will get their turn to speak.

Think before you speak. Be sure that what you’re going to say is what you really mean.

Summarize the previous person’s comments before adding your own.

Address ideas, not the person. Challenging ideas or statements is good only if we respect the individuality and inherent value of the person who expressed them.

Three before me. To make sure everyone’s voice is heard, you may not make another comment until three others have shared their thoughts.

The Statements

- One’s crush must be kept a secret.
- A secret crush is charming.
- Everyone has a duty to protect their homeland, above all else.
- There is no crime worse than treason.
- Deceit is harmless.
- Everyone longs for affection.
- Love can be tamed.
- You choose who you love.
- Jealousy is an innate human emotion.
- A grieving heart cannot be consoled.
- You must listen to your heart.
- The heart tells no lie.
- Nothing in life can separate true love.
- Whom we love, and how we love, is deterministic.
- Love is rational.
- Everyone has a destiny.
- You can change your fate.
- Love is at the core of a life well lived.
- At its core, every story is a love story.

The Show Must Go On | Synopsis

ACT I

Radamès, an Egyptian warrior, loves Aida, the Ethiopian slave of the Egyptian princess Amneris. He doesn't know that Aida, who returns his affections, is the daughter of the Ethiopian king. Amneris also loves Radamès. When the high priest Ramfis warns Radamès of an impending new Ethiopian assault on Egypt, Radamès hopes to be made commander of the army: a victory would enable him to set his beloved free. Amneris realizes that Radamès is in love with her slave. When the King does select Radamès to lead the army, Aida finds herself torn between two loves: for Radamès and for her Ethiopian homeland. Ramfis oversees the solemn ceremony in which Radamès is installed as the new commander. All in the temple then join in an impassioned prayer for Egypt's victory.

- Which three characters are involved in the love triangle at the opening of Act I?
- What does Radamès hope to gain upon winning victory for his country?
- Who is Ramfis, and what is his role?

ACT II

News has arrived of Egypt's victory over Ethiopia, and Amneris is preparing for Radamès's return. To confirm her suspicions about him and Aida, Amneris lets on that the commander has been killed. After observing her slave's grief, Amneris tells the truth—Radamès is alive. Now, detecting Aida's joyous relief, the princess knows her concern to be justified. She leaves for the victory celebration. Aida prays to her own gods. The victorious army enters in a grand parade before the King, its Ethiopian captives trailing behind. Radamès is honored above all. Aida recognizes her father, Amonasro, among the prisoners, but he signals her not to reveal his identity. Amonasro pleads mercy for the captives. Radamès, in turn, asks the Egyptian king to overturn a priestly decree that the Ethiopians be killed. To honor his commander, the King not only agrees, but offers Radamès his daughter, Amneris, as bride.

- Who is honored at the victory celebration?
- How do you think Aida feels upon seeing her father?
- Who is offered to Radamès as a bride?

The Show Must Go On | Cast and Costume

Use found items to costume your assigned character! A found item is anything in your classroom you have permission to use from the item's owner (e.g., a sweatshirt, a pencil, sticky notes, etc.). Get creative! And make sure to ask before using a found item that does not belong to you.

Aida

Imprisoned in Egypt as Amneris's slave, Aida is caught between her love for Radamès, the Egyptian warrior, and her loyalty to her father, the captured Ethiopian king Amonasro.

Amneris

Cold and scheming, Amneris is determined to wed Radamès. When she senses his love for Aida, she wields her power to her own benefit.

Radamès

When Radamès is chosen to lead Egypt's war against Ethiopia, he hopes he will be able to free Aida. His reward for victory in battle, however, is to wed Amneris.

Amonasro

Though captured following Ethiopia's defeat, Amonasro is able to convince his daughter Aida to gain critical information about an impending attack before making his escape.

Ramfis

A spiritual and political advisor to Amneris and the King, Ramfis helps oversee the war effort and administers punishment to those found guilty of crimes.

The King

Amneris's father, the King of Egypt names Radamès to lead their army and honors Amonasro's plea for mercy.

Fragments of Your Imagination

Who/what is shown in the fragment you received?

What items did you add?

Do you think your additions are accurate? Why or why not?

What story does your fragment tell?

What made this image significant enough to record?

Professional archeologists also try to fill in missing pieces of knowledge about the ancient world. Do you think they draw incomplete or inaccurate conclusions about the ancient world? What might they have gotten wrong?

(Optional) Is *Aida* an accurate “fragment” of events in ancient Egypt? Which parts seem accurate? Which seem inaccurate?

Social-Emotional Learning | "Where I'm From" by George Ella Lyon

I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the back porch.
(Black, glistening,
it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush
the Dutch elm
whose long-gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.

I'm from fudge and eyeglasses,
from Imogene and Alafair.
I'm from the know-it-alls
and the pass-it-ons,
from Perk up! and Pipe down!
I'm from He restoreth my soul
with a cottonball lamb
and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,
fried corn and strong coffee.
From the finger my grandfather lost
to the auger,
the eye my father shut to keep his sight.

Under my bed was a dress box
spilling old pictures,
a sift of lost faces
to drift beneath my dreams.
I am from those moments—
snapped before I budded—
leaf-fall from the family tree.

Social-Emotional Learning | Poem Template

I am from _____
(SPECIFIC ORDINARY ITEM)

from _____ *and* _____
(PRODUCT NAME) (PRODUCT NAME)

I am from the _____
(HOME DESCRIPTION)

(_____ , _____
(ADJECTIVE) (ADJECTIVE)

(SENSORY DETAIL))

I am from _____ , _____
(PLANT, FLOWER, NATURAL ITEM) (DESCRIPTION OF ABOVE ITEM)

I'm from _____ *and* _____
(FAMILY TRADITION) (FAMILY TRAIT)

from _____ *and* _____
(NAME OF FAMILY MEMBER) (ANOTHER FAMILY NAME)

I'm from the _____ *and* _____
(DESCRIPTION OF FAMILY TENDENCY) (ANOTHER ONE)

from _____ *and* _____
(SOMETHING YOU WERE TOLD AS A CHILD) (ANOTHER)

I'm from _____ *and* _____
(REPRESENTATION OF RELIGION OR LACK OF) (FURTHER DESCRIPTION)

I'm from _____
(PLACE OF BIRTH AND FAMILY ANCESTRY)

_____ *and* _____
(A FOOD ITEM THAT REPRESENTS YOUR FAMILY) (ANOTHER ONE)

From the _____
(SPECIFIC FAMILY STORY ABOUT A SPECIFIC PERSON AND DETAIL)

the _____
(ANOTHER DETAIL OF ANOTHER FAMILY MEMBER)

(LOCATION OF FAMILY PICTURES, MEMENTOS, ARCHIVES)

(LINE EXPLAINING THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY ITEMS)

Opera Review: *Aida*

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

As you watch *Aida*, 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 would you have done differently? Think carefully about the action, music, and stage design. Then, after the opera, share your opinions with your friends, classmates, and anyone else who wants to learn more about the opera and this performance at the Met!

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN / STAGING
Ramfis tells Radamès that Ethiopia is preparing to attack Egypt. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Radamès learns that Isis has chosen a leader. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Amneris hints at her own purposes. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Aida appears, completing the romantic triangle. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
The King announces the battle with Ethiopia. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Aida recognizes her difficult position. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Radamès is consecrated in the temple of Vulcan. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Amneris tricks Aida into revealing her secret. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
The victorious army returns. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN / STAGING
Amonasro begs for mercy. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
The King announces that Radamès will wed Amneris. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Ramfis and Amneris enter a temple to pray. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Aida longs for her homeland. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Amonasro asks Aida to trap Radamès. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Aida has a fateful encounter with Radamès. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Amneris pleads for mercy toward Radamès. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Radamès refuses to repent. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
The priests pass judgment. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Radamès is left to die alone—or so he thinks. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
The fates of Radamès, Aida, and Amneris are sealed. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆