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Didactic Project

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

1º & 2º E.S.O.

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Activity 1: Synopsis

• Read the synopsis of *The Phantom of the Opera* to get a general understanding of the new storyline. Use the glossary to help you.

At the Paris Opera House, a mysterious figure known as the Phantom seems to control everything that happens on and behind the stage. When Carlotta suddenly becomes ill, Christine Daaé, her young ***understudy,*** *is given the opportunity to perform. Strange events soon begin to disturb the theatre: a* ***stagehand*** *is found dead, a huge* ***chandelier*** *crashes down, and witnesses claim to have seen the Phantom appear and* ***vanish*** *without explanation.*

Christine gradually discovers that the mysterious Voice guiding her belongs to Erik, a brilliant but isolated man who hides his face behind a ***mask.*** *He lives in secret* ***chambers*** *beneath the Opera House and uses hidden passages, tricks and threats to control those around him. Inspector Mifroid and Raoul try to discover the truth, while each new* ***clue*** *seems to reveal another part of Erik's past.*

As the story develops, the Phantom continues to ***threaten*** *those who oppose him, while Christine is forced to look beyond his frightening* ***appearance*** *and understand the suffering that has shaped him. In the final confrontation, she must make a difficult* ***choice*** *between fear, compassion and responsibility, while Raoul and Erik face the consequences of their actions.*

appearance: the way a person or thing looks.
chambers: private rooms where someone lives or stays.
chandelier: a large decorative light that hangs from the ceiling.
choice: a decision between two or more possibilities.
clue: a piece of information that helps solve a mystery.
mask: something that covers part or all of the face.
stagehand: a person who works behind the stage in a theatre.
to threaten: to say or show that you may hurt someone or cause a problem.
to vanish: to disappear suddenly.
understudy: an actor who can replace another actor if necessary.

Activity 2: The Characters

• Below are extracts spoken by characters in the new play. Match the correct pair of adjectives to each character.

mysterious and controlling • kind and conflicted • jealous and dramatic • brave and impulsive • methodical and sceptical • ambitious and anxious

THE PHANTOM: _____

"Christine... I am always with you. I am your voice." / "Everything is in the script."

CHRISTINE: _____

"But I don't want the best for me if it involves others suffering."

CARLOTTA: _____

"This is ridiculous! I am the leading lady!"

RAOUL: _____

"As soon as he arrives, I'll rip off his mask. I want to see the face of that man."

MIFROID: _____

"I want every exit in the theatre sealed: doors, windows... everything."

MONCHARMIN: _____

"A tragedy! A disaster for my business!"

Activity 3: Theatre, Opera and Mystery

• Let's talk about theatre and mystery! Discuss the questions with your classmates.

- *What is an opera house? What kinds of people work there besides singers?*
- *What is the difference between an opera, a play and a musical?*
- *Why do masks work well in mystery stories?*
- *Can you think of another story in which a hidden identity is important?*
- *What do you think the sentence "Everything is in the script" could mean?*
- *Which creates more suspense on stage: darkness, silence, music, smoke or a sudden sound? Why?*

• Here are some fun facts about The Phantom of the Opera and the world behind the story.

DID YOU KNOW...?

1. Gaston Leroux published *The Phantom of the Opera* as a serial in France in 1909–1910 before it appeared as a novel.

2. The story is set in the Palais Garnier, the historic Paris Opera House, famous for its grand staircase, chandelier and underground spaces.

3. A real underground water reservoir exists beneath the Palais Garnier. Leroux transformed details like this into the legendary "lake" beneath the Opera House.

4. Masks, trapdoors, mirrors, hidden passages and stage machinery were perfect ingredients for a mystery set inside a theatre.

• Discuss which fact surprises you most and how a theatre building can become part of a mystery story.

Activity 1: Put the Events in Order

Read the following events from the play and put them in the correct chronological order. Write numbers 1–8.

___ Raoul discovers that *Romeo and Juliet* opens a secret passage.

___ Christine hears the mysterious Voice encouraging her before the performance.

___ Mifroid orders all the theatre exits to be closed.

___ Carlotta becomes seriously ill after drinking tea.

___ The chandelier falls into the audience.

___ Raoul and Christine meet again after many years.

___ The Phantom appears at the masquerade ball.

___ Joseph Buquet is found dead backstage.

Then answer:

1. Which event happens first?
2. Which event makes Raoul begin to believe that the Phantom may be real?
3. Which two events show that the Phantom can control what happens inside the Opera House?

Activity 2: Detective File

Inspector Mifroid is investigating the strange events at the Opera House. Read each piece of evidence and decide what it suggests. Match each clue with the most logical conclusion.

CLUE	CONCLUSION
1. Christine hears a Voice that no one else can see.	A. The Phantom knows the theatre extremely well.
2. Money disappears from a closed box.	B. Christine believes someone is secretly guiding her.
3. The chandelier falls during a performance.	C. Someone may be using tricks or hidden mechanisms.
4. Erik knows about secret passages and doors.	D. The Phantom is prepared to put other people in danger.
5. A quotation from *Romeo and Juliet* leads Raoul to a secret entrance.	E. Words and literary references can function as clues.

Now classify the evidence:

Write **FACT**, **SUSPICION** or **INTERPRETATION**.

1. The money disappeared from the box. _____
2. The Phantom is a real ghost. _____
3. Erik knows the secret passages of the theatre. _____
4. Christine trusts the Voice because she associates it with her father. _____
5. The chandelier fell because the Phantom wanted to frighten everyone. _____

Think and discuss:

Which piece of evidence is the strongest? Why?

Activity 3: Who Said It and What Does It Reveal?

Read the quotations and identify the speaker. Then choose what each quotation reveals about the character.

A. fear
B. ambition
C. compassion
D. jealousy
E. determination
F. control

1. *"Everything is in the script."*
   Speaker: _____
   It reveals: _____
2. *"This is ridiculous! I am the leading lady!"*
   Speaker: _____
   It reveals: _____
3. *"We must find Miss Christine as soon as possible."*
   Speaker: _____
   It reveals: _____
4. *"You shouldn't come any closer."*
   Speaker: _____
   It reveals: _____
5. *"I'm not afraid anymore."*
   Speaker: _____
   It reveals: _____
6. *"A tragedy! A disaster for my business!"*
   Speaker: _____
   It reveals: _____

Final task

Choose one quotation and explain in 2–3 sentences what it tells us about the character.

This quotation shows that _____.

The character feels/thinks _____.

This is important because _____.

Activity 1: Prepositions

• Place these prepositions in the correct spaces. Some may be used more than once.

about • at • from • in • of • on • to • with

RAOUL: We can't keep running (1) _____ someone who doesn't exist.

CHRISTINE: He does exist. He's coming (2) _____ the ball tonight.

RAOUL: Then let's go. I can't wait (3) _____ meet him!

CHRISTINE: Promise me you won't do anything foolish.

RAOUL: I'm not afraid (4) _____ him.

THE PHANTOM: What does that matter, my dear Christine? I only follow the script.

CHRISTINE: My father always protected me. Are you my angel?

THE PHANTOM: If you want me (5) _____ be your angel, I will be.

RAOUL: I want to see the face (6) _____ that man.

CHRISTINE: He has lived hidden (7) _____ people for years.

MONCHARMIN: As long as he stays (8) _____ sight, he can't do anything to us.

MIFROID: I want to know more (9) _____ the Phantom and the strange events in this theatre.

RAOUL: Christine is afraid (10) _____ what he might do next.

MONCHARMIN: He is always interfering (11) _____ the performances and threatening the people who work here.

CHRISTINE: I don't want to depend (12) _____ fear when I make my decisions.

RAOUL: We need to find a way (13) _____ stop him before someone else gets hurt.

THE PHANTOM: You are too interested (14) _____ things you do not understand.

MIFROID: I am responsible (15) _____ finding out the truth.

CHRISTINE: I still believe there is something human (16) _____ him.

• Now choose four of the completed expressions and write a new sentence with each one.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Activity 2: Missing Words

• Read the extract from the final confrontation and complete the missing words. The first letter of each word is given. Use the context to help you.

ERIK: Christine, you must give the (1) _____ by touching our shoulders.
RAOUL: I (2) _____.
ERIK: Whenever you're ready, Christine.
(Christine lets go. Both men take ten (3) _____, turn and fire. Erik falls.)
RAOUL: Wait... this gun?!
CHRISTINE: Erik!
RAOUL: This is a blank-firing pistol! It's (4) _____!
CHRISTINE: Erik! Why?
ERIK: Because... everything is in the (5) _____...
VOICE: He could do many clever things with ropes, mirrors and secret (6) _____. He could not live in the outside world because of his terribly disfigured (7) _____. But in the end, he was a (8) _____. He wanted a woman's love.

• Now match the completed words with their meanings.

a. face
b. agree
c. doors
d. signal
e. fake
f. man
g. steps
h. script

- not real
- a written text for a play
- movements made when walking
- a person of the male sex
- an action or sign that tells someone when to begin
- parts of a building that open and close an entrance
- the front part of a person's head
- to have the same opinion or accept a proposal

Activity 3: What Happens Next?

• Read the moment immediately before the duel and predict what will happen next. Think about the characters' personalities, their relationship with Christine and the events that have taken place so far.

ERIK: You're right. We have to put an end to this.

(Erik opens a chest and pulls out two pistols.)

ERIK: Let's have a duel.

CHRISTINE: No, no! This is foolish! You can't settle it like this, not this way!

RAOUL: I agree. Let fate decide who lives.

• Who do you think will win the duel? Give one reason for your answer.

• Do you think Erik really wants to kill Raoul, or is he trying to prove something? Explain your opinion.

• What do you think Christine will do before or during the duel?

• How do you think Raoul will react if Erik is injured?

• The phrase "Everything is in the script" has appeared several times in the play. How could it become important again in the final scene?

• Do you expect the ending to be tragic, happy or unexpected? Why?

• Imagine that one of the characters could make a different decision at this moment. What should Erik, Raoul or Christine do to avoid the duel?

• Write your own ending for the play in three or four sentences. Try to include what happens to Erik, Christine and Raoul.

Useful language

I think that…

In my opinion…

Perhaps…

I think Erik/Raoul/Christine will… because…

If I were Christine, I would…

The ending might be…

Activity 1: What Did You Think?

Now you have seen *The Phantom of the Opera*! Was it how you imagined it to be? Compare the actual performance with your expectations.

• Was Erik more frightening, more human, or both?

• Which scene created the most suspense?

• Which character changed the most during the play?

• Did the ending surprise you? Why?

• Which was more effective: dialogue, acting, music/sound, lighting or scenery?

• Did your prediction from Session 3 come close to the real ending?

USEFUL LANGUAGE: I expected... / I was surprised by... / I preferred... / The most effective part was... because...

Activity 2: Write Your Own Review!

• Imagine you are a journalist for your school magazine. Write a review of the play giving your opinion about the following.

THE PLOT	THE ACTORS	THE SCRIPT	THE COSTUMES	THE SCENERY	THE MUSIC / SOUND
interesting · mysterious · exciting · surprising · dramatic · confusing	*convincing · expressive · funny · natural · energetic · talented*	*entertaining · clever · original · clear · dramatic · humorous*	*elegant · colourful · realistic · creative · impressive · appropriate*	*spectacular · atmospheric · realistic · detailed · impressive · mysterious*	*powerful · dramatic · haunting · exciting · effective · atmospheric*

Opening model:

Yesterday our class attended *The Phantom of the Opera*, a mystery set inside the Paris Opera House. The story combines suspense, romance and humour...

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Activity 3: Your Turn!

• Choose one of the following scenes. In groups, act it out for your classmates. Focus on voice, pauses, movement and character.

OPTION 1 — CARLOTTA AND THE TEA

CARLOTTA: Nadir? Nadir! Where the devil has that Persian got to?
NADIR: What do you require, madam?
CARLOTTA: Bring me more tea.
NADIR: Yes, ma'am.
(Nadir brings her the tea and accidentally spills it.)
CARLOTTA: You fool! You're burning me!
NADIR: I'm so sorry! I truly am! Please, let me clean it for you!
CARLOTTA: How dare you touch me? Get out of here!
(Nadir exits. Later, Death enters silently, takes the tea and pours Carlotta another cup.)
CARLOTTA: More tea. At last, you're taking care of me.

OPTION 2 — THE MASQUERADE

THE VOICE: Do you have a problem with my face, Raoul?
(The Phantom enters and offers his hand to Christine.)
RAOUL: Are you the Phantom? Are you the one who's making Christine's life a living hell?
THE PHANTOM: It is impolite to refuse a dance.
(Christine accepts his invitation.)
CHRISTINE: Erik, you're in danger here.
THE PHANTOM: What does that matter, my dear Christine? I only follow the script.
CHRISTINE: Why me? Why have you always helped me?
THE PHANTOM: Isn't it obvious, little one?
CHRISTINE: My father always protected me. Are you my angel?
THE PHANTOM: If you want me to be your angel, I will be.

OPTION 3 — IN ERIK'S CHAMBERS

THE PHANTOM: You're right. You should leave. Go back to him. He doesn't wear a mask.
CHRISTINE: I've learned from your voice, from your things, from your lessons... You've helped me so much. Let me help you.
THE PHANTOM: Help me?
CHRISTINE: Yes.
THE PHANTOM: You shouldn't come any closer.
CHRISTINE: I'm not afraid anymore.
(Christine gently places a hand on his back.)
THE PHANTOM: Christine...
(She kisses him on the forehead.)
THE PHANTOM: Why?
CHRISTINE: Because there are things that are not in the script.