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Didactic Project

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

Bachillerato &
Ciclos Formativos de Grado Medio

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SESSION 1: SYNOPSIS AND CHARACTERS

Activity 1: Beyond the Synopsis

• Read the synopsis carefully. Then complete the activities below. Do not only look for what happens: think about what the events suggest about the characters and the main conflicts of the play.

At the Paris Opera House, Christine Daaé becomes the centre of a series of mysterious events connected with a hidden figure known as the Phantom. While Inspector Mifroid tries to understand what is happening, Raoul gradually discovers that Christine has been guided by a mysterious Voice. Behind that Voice is Erik, a brilliant but isolated man who knows every corner of the Opera House and seems able to control what happens inside it.

As Christine becomes more successful, Erik's influence over her grows. His actions become increasingly dangerous, while Raoul tries to protect Christine and expose the truth. At the masquerade ball, the Phantom finally appears before them. Later, a literary clue leads Raoul through a secret passage to Erik's hidden chambers. There, Christine discovers a vulnerable human being behind the frightening mask. The final confrontation forces all three characters to make decisions about fear, love, control and responsibility.

• Read the following extracts from the story. The text does not tell you everything directly. Use the information given to infer what may be happening.

Extract 1

Christine has been hearing a mysterious Voice that encourages her and seems to know what she needs before she performs. At first, she associates the Voice with the memory of her father.

What can you infer?

1. Why might Christine trust the Voice?

---

2. Why could this trust make her vulnerable?

---

3. Which TWO ideas are most closely connected with this situation?

☐ ambition

☐ trust

☐ manipulation

☐ jealousy

☐ humour

☐ responsibility

Extract 2

Erik knows hidden passages, secret doors and rooms that most people inside the Opera House do not know exist.

Complete:

What we know:

Erik knows the Opera House extremely well.

What we can infer:

What we still do not know:

Extract 3

Christine gradually stops seeing Erik only as a frightening figure and begins to recognise the person behind the mask.

Which interpretation is the most convincing?

A. Christine no longer thinks Erik has done anything wrong.

B. Christine begins to understand Erik without necessarily approving of his actions.

C. Christine decides that Erik is completely innocent.

D. Christine stops caring about Raoul.

Answer: _____

Explain your choice:

_____

_____

Final task

Complete the sentence:

One of the central conflicts of the play may be the difference between what a person _____ and what a person _____.

Then explain your idea in 2–3 sentences.

_____

_____

Activity 2: Character Dossiers

• Complete a psychological profile for each character. Use the extracts as evidence.

ERIK / THE PHANTOM

"Everything is in the script."

"If you want me to be your angel, I will be."

"You shouldn't come any closer."

ASPECT	YOUR INTERPRETATION
What does he want?	_____
What does he fear?	_____
How does he try to control other people?	_____
What contradiction can you identify in his behaviour?	_____

CHRISTINE

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

"I'm not afraid anymore."

ASPECT	YOUR INTERPRETATION
What does she want?	_____
What is she afraid of?	_____
How does her attitude towards Erik change?	_____
Which value seems most important to her?	_____

RAOUL

"As soon as he arrives, I'll rip off his mask."

"Christine, get away from that monster!"

ASPECT	YOUR INTERPRETATION
What motivates him?	_____
What is his main strength?	_____
What is his main weakness?	_____
Does he always act rationally? Why / why not?	_____

- **Final task**

Choose one of the three characters and complete the sentence:

The most important contradiction in _____'s personality is that...

Activity 3: Symbols of the Opera House

• Some objects and places in the play have a meaning beyond their practical function. Match each symbol with a possible interpretation. More than one answer may be possible.

SYMBOL	POSSIBLE MEANING
The mask	A. Control, destiny or the desire to determine what will happen
The red rose	B. Hidden identity and fear of rejection
The chandelier	C. Affection, admiration and emotional attachment
The script	D. The danger created when power becomes destructive
The secret passages	E. Hidden truths and the invisible world behind appearances
The Opera House	F. A place where reality and illusion constantly mix

• Now explain two of your choices.

The _____ can represent _____ because _____.

The _____ can represent _____ because _____.

• Think and discuss

Why is a theatre an especially appropriate setting for a story about appearance and reality?

_____

SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING THE PLAY

Activity 1: Cause and Consequence

• Events in the play are connected. One decision or action often produces another. Match each cause with its most logical consequence.

CAUSE	CONSEQUENCE
1. Carlotta suddenly becomes seriously ill.	A. Raoul begins looking for a hidden entrance.
2. Christine hears a Voice that seems to guide her.	B. Christine has the opportunity to perform.
3. Strange events continue inside the Opera House.	C. She becomes increasingly dependent on an unknown influence.
4. Erik appears at the masquerade ball.	D. Suspicion and fear surrounding the Phantom increase.
5. Raoul understands the reference to *Romeo and Juliet*.	E. The conflict between Erik and Raoul becomes more direct.

Answers:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

• Now decide whether each consequence was:

INTENDED — somebody wanted it to happen.
UNINTENDED — it happened as a consequence of another action.
UNCERTAIN — we cannot know for sure.

1. Christine becomes the performer after Carlotta becomes ill.

---

2. Raoul becomes increasingly suspicious of Erik.

---

3. Christine becomes emotionally dependent on the Voice.

• Complete the chains

Carlotta becomes ill → Christine performs → _____ **→**

_____

Erik hides his identity → _____ **→ Christine** _____

Raoul discovers the literary clue → _____ **→** _____

Think and discuss

Which character creates the greatest number of consequences through his or her decisions?

Erik · Christine · Raoul · Carlotta · Mifroid

Give **two pieces of evidence** to support your answer.

1. _____
2. _____

Activity 2: The Language of Power

• Read the sentences and identify the linguistic strategy being used.

command · threat · persuasion · reassurance · challenge · request

1. *"I want every exit in the theatre sealed."*
   Strategy: _____
2. *"Please, take the script."*
   Strategy: _____
3. *"Promise me you won't do anything foolish."*
   Strategy: _____
4. *"Do you have a problem with my face, Raoul?"*
   Strategy: _____
5. *"If you want me to be your angel, I will be."*
   Strategy: _____
6. *"Stay away from me, and more important, stay away from Christine."*
   Strategy: _____

• Now, look at the verbs and expressions. Which characters tend to use language to control other people? Give two examples.

Character: _____

Example 1: _____

Example 2: _____

• Transform the sentences. Change the communicative intention without changing the basic meaning.

Original: *"Stay away from Christine."*

Turn it into a polite request:

Original: *"You must give the signal."*

Turn it into a suggestion:

Original: *"I want every exit sealed."*

Turn it into a question:

Activity 3: Change the Point of View

• Read the situation. Then rewrite it from another character's point of view.

Situation

At the masquerade ball, Christine sees Erik appear in front of Raoul and Moncharmin. Raoul immediately wants to confront him. Christine, however, knows more about Erik than Raoul does and understands that he is both dangerous and vulnerable.

Choose ONE character:

Christine · Raoul · Erik

Write an internal monologue of approximately **100–120 words** explaining:

- what the character sees;
- what he/she is thinking;
- what he/she is afraid of;
- what he/she wants to happen;
- what he/she does not say aloud.

You may begin:

Christine:
When I saw Erik enter the room, I knew that...

Raoul:
The moment I saw that masked man, I thought...

Erik:
They were all looking at me, but the only person I could see was...

SESSION 3: THE ENDING

Activity 1: Crossing the Line

• Throughout the story, characters make decisions under pressure. Decide how you would classify each action.

A. Read and classify

Write:

U = Understandable
P = Problematic
UAC = Unacceptable

ACTION	YOUR DECISION
1. Christine trusts the mysterious Voice because she connects it with her father.	____
2. Raoul wants to remove Erik's mask without his permission.	____
3. Erik hides his identity because he fears rejection.	____
4. Erik threatens people in order to control what happens in the theatre.	____
5. Raoul confronts Erik because he wants to protect Christine.	____
6. Christine shows compassion towards Erik despite what he has done.	____

B. Choose TWO actions and justify your classification

Action nº _____

I classified this action as _____ because

_____

_____

Action nº _____

I classified this action as _____ because

C. Where is the line?

Complete each statement.

Fear may explain a person's behaviour, but it does not give them the right to...

_____

Wanting to protect someone becomes problematic when...

_____

Showing compassion does not necessarily mean...

_____

_____

D. Final challenge

Which statement do you agree with most?

A. A difficult past reduces a person's responsibility for their actions.
B. A difficult past may explain behaviour but does not remove responsibility.
C. People should only be judged by what they do, not by what has happened to them.

Choose: **A / B / C**

Give **two reasons** for your answer.

1. _____
2. _____

Activity 2: "Everything Is in the Script"

•The sentence "Everything is in the script" appears repeatedly throughout the play. Readthe situations and explain what the sentence may mean in each one.

Situation 1

Christine is nervous before performing. The Voice tells her:

"Whenever you have doubts, remember... everything is in the script."

Meaning:

Situation 2

Erik appears after watching Christine and Raoul together.

"Everything is in the script."

Meaning:

Situation 3

During the final confrontation, Erik repeats the sentence again.

Meaning:

•Which interpretation best describes the evolution of the expression?

A.It always means exactly the same thing.

B.It changes from reassurance to control and finally to acceptance.

C.It is only a joke connected with the theatre.

D.It refers only to Christine's acting.

•Complete the idea.

At the beginning of the play, the script represents _____, but by the end it may represent _____.

Activity 3: The Final Decision

• **Read the situation immediately before the duel.**

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.

RAOUL: I agree. Let fate decide who lives.

• **Before seeing the ending, analyse the possible decisions.**

CHARACTER	POSSIBLE DECISION	POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCE
Erik	Continue with the duel	_____
Erik	Refuse to fight	_____
Raoul	Accept the duel	_____
Raoul	Try to leave with Christine	_____
Christine	Allow them to fight	_____

• **Which decision would be most consistent with each character's personality? Explain.**

Erik:

_____

Raoul:

_____

Christine:

_____

• Write an alternative ending of approximately 100 words.

Your ending must:

- **be consistent with the characters;**
- **resolve the conflict;**
- **include the phrase "Everything is in the script";**
- **change at least one important decision from the original situation.**

SESSION 4: EXPRESS YOURSELF

Activity 1: From Expectation to Performance

• Compare your interpretation before the performance with what you actually saw on stage.

ASPECT	BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE I EXPECTED...	AFTER THE PERFORMANCE I THOUGHT...
Erik	_____	_____
Christine	_____	_____
Raoul	_____	_____
The ending	_____	_____
The atmosphere	_____	_____

• Evaluate how the following theatrical elements influenced your interpretation.

Give each element a score from 1 to 5 and justify one of your scores.

ELEMENT	1–5
Acting	___
Lighting	___
Sound / music	___
Costumes	___
Scenery	___
Movement / stage space	___

The most effective element was _____ because _____.

Activity 2: A Critical Review

• Write a critical review of approximately 150–180 words.

Your review should not only describe the performance. It should evaluate it and justify your opinions.

Include:

- INTRODUCTION

  Title, type of performance and general impression.

- PLOT AND SCRIPT

  Was the story easy to follow? Was suspense maintained?

- PERFORMANCE

  Evaluate the actors and characterisation.

- STAGING

  Comment on scenery, lighting, costume, sound and movement.

- INTERPRETATION

  Did the performance make you see Erik, Christine or Raoul differently?

- CONCLUSION

  Would you recommend the play? Why?

Useful expressions:

One of the strongest aspects of the performance was...

The scene in which... was particularly effective because...

In contrast...

Although..., I found...

The production succeeds in...

Overall, I would recommend / would not recommend...

Activity 3: The Director's Notebook

• Imagine that you are directing a new production of *The Phantom of the Opera*. Choose ONE scene.

OPTION 1: Carlotta and the poisoned tea
OPTION 2: The masquerade
OPTION 3: Christine in Erik's chambers
OPTION 4: The final duel

Complete your director's notebook:

ELEMENT	YOUR DECISION	WHY?
Lighting	_____	_____
Sound / music	_____	_____
Costumes	_____	_____
Position of the actors	_____	_____
Movement	_____	_____
Most important object / prop	_____	_____
Mood of the scene	_____	_____

• Choose one key moment and explain exactly how you would stage it.

_____

_____

_____

• Final task

Present your proposal to the class in approximately two minutes. Explain at least three of your decisions and how they would affect the audience's interpretation of the scene.