MOBY-DICK

JAKE HEGGIE AND GENE SCHEER

LANGUAGE ARTS: What a Novel Idea

Students will

- Read the *Moby-Dick* Synopsis and "The Characters"
- Read Chapter 123 of the novel *Moby Dick* (The Musket) and Act 1 Scene 7 of the opera *Moby-Dick*
- Compare and contrast the chapter from the novel and the scene from the opera
- Write a summary of their observations, and discuss with the class

Copies for Each Student: *Moby-Dick* Synopsis, "The Characters", *Moby Dick* Chapter 123: The Musket, *Moby-Dick* libretto excerpt, Activity Worksheet and Summary Page

Copies for the Teacher: *Moby-Dick* Synopsis, "The Characters", *Moby Dick* Chapter 123: The Musket, *Moby-Dick* libretto excerpt, Activity Worksheet and Summary Page

Getting Ready

Decide which section(s) of the lesson you wish your group to complete.
Prepare internet access for *Moby Dick* online listening of Chapter 123 reading.
http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/42/moby-dick/804/chapter-123-the-musket/
Prepare internet access for *Moby Dick* online listening selections.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9CmZ531N1s
Gather pens, pencils, dictionaries, thesauruses and additional writing paper as needed for your group.

Introduction

Read the *Moby-Dick* Synopsis and "The Characters" with your students. Play Chapter 123: The Musket audio file from the *Moby Dick* novel and have your students read along. Then have students listen to Act 1 scene 7 from the opera and read the libretto. Have students complete the Activity Worksheet and write a summary of their findings.

Guided/Independent Practice

Depending on your grade level, the ability of your students, and time constraints, you may choose to have students work as a whole class, in small groups, with a partner, or individually. Provide instruction and model the activity as needed.

*Depending on the reading level of your students, you may want to review key words or unfamiliar phrases in the *Moby Dick* chapter selection.

Evaluation

Have students share their observations with the class and guide class discussion. It is important to note that the major difference between the two reading selections is the role of the narrator. In the novel, the narrator functions in the traditional sense. In the opera, the narrator role does not exist in the same way, but the commentary is present in the music and the visual aspects of the staging, costumes, sets, etc.

TEKS

English Language Arts and Reading

6th Grade

110.18. b. 5 Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama
Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to explain the similarities and differences in the setting, characters, and plot of a play and those in a film based upon the same story line.

110.18. b. 6 B,C Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction
Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to: (B) recognize dialect and conversational voice and explain how authors use dialect to convey character; and (C) describe different forms of point-of-view, including first- and third-person.

7th Grade

110.19. b. 5 Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama
Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to explain a playwright's use of dialogue and stage directions.

110.19. b. 6 C Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction
Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to: (C) analyze different forms of point of view, including first-person, third-person omniscient, and third-person limited.

8th Grade

110.20. b. 5 Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama
Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze how different playwrights characterize their protagonists and antagonists through the dialogue and staging of their plays.

110.20. b. 6 B,C Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction
Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to: (B) analyze how the central characters' qualities influence the theme of a fictional work and resolution of the central conflict; and (C) analyze different forms of point of view, including limited versus omniscient, subjective versus objective.

English I

110.31. b. 4 Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama
Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to explain how dramatic conventions (e.g., monologues, soliloquies, dramatic irony) enhance dramatic text.

110.31. b. 5 C Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction
Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to: (C) analyze the way in which a work of fiction is shaped by the narrator's point of view.

English II

110.32. b. 4 Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama
Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze how archetypes and motifs in drama affect the plot of plays.

110.32. b. 5 A,C Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction

Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to: (A) analyze isolated scenes and their contribution to the success of the plot as a whole in a variety of works of fiction; (C) evaluate the connection between forms of narration (e.g., unreliable, omniscient) and tone in works of fiction.

English III
110.33. b. 4 Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama
Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze the themes and characteristics in different periods of modern American drama.

110.33. b. 5 C Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction
Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to: (C) analyze the impact of narration when the narrator's point of view shifts from one character to another.

English IV
110.34. b. 4 Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama
Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to evaluate how the structure and elements of drama change in the works of British dramatists across literary periods.

110.34. b. 5 B,C Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction
Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to: (B) analyze the moral dilemmas and quandaries presented in works of fiction as revealed by the underlying motivations and behaviors of the characters; (C) compare and contrast the effects of different forms of narration across various genres of fiction.

Correlates: Music, Drama

Gardner's Intelligences: Verbal-Linguistic, Musical, Interpersonal

Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis

Sources:
Moby Dick Libretto
Melville H. (1851). *Moby Dick.* London, England: Richard Bently.

Online Resources:
www.oxfordmusiconline.com
www.aria-database.com
http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/42/moby-dick/
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/25/arts/music/25moby.html?_r=1

**Moby-Dick was premiered at The Dallas Opera in 2010 and commissioned jointly with San Francisco Opera, San Diego Opera, State Opera of South Australia and Calgary Opera.*

Moby-Dick
Synopsis

ACT ONE

Scenes 1 to 4. Day One: The whaling ship Pequod *has been at sea for one week*

Captain Ahab stands alone on deck in the hours before dawn. Below deck, while most of the crew sleeps, the harpooneer Queequeg prays and wakes Greenhorn, a loner and newcomer to whaling. Dawn breaks and the call is made for "All Hands!" While the crew is raising the ship's sails, Starbuck, Stubb, and Flask talk about Ahab, whom no one has seen since the ship left Nantucket.

The crew sings of whales, wealth and home when suddenly, Captain Ahab appears. He tells them of Moby Dick, the white whale that took off one of his legs, then nails a gold doubloon to the mast and promises it to the man who first sights him. This is the real reason they have sailed, he explains: to search the globe to find and destroy this one whale. His rousing call of "Death to Moby Dick!" excites everyone but the first mate, Starbuck. To no avail, he confronts Ahab about what he sees as a futile and blasphemous mission.

Starbuck instructs Greenhorn about the dangers of whaling. When he ponders never again seeing his wife and son, he is overcome with emotion and orders Queequeg to complete the lesson. Stubb sights a pod of whales, but Ahab will not allow the eager crew to hunt since they have not yet found Moby Dick. Starbuck orders the crew to sail on and sends Greenhorn up to the lookout on the masthead, joined by Queequeg.

As the sun begins to set, Ahab looks over the wake of the ship and mourns that his obsession deprives him of any enjoyment of beauty. All is anguish to him. At the masthead, Queequeg and Greenhorn look over the world, while Starbuck, on deck, bemoans Ahab's madness.

Scenes 5 to 7. Day Two: Three months later

After three months without a single whale hunt, Stubb jokes with the young cabin boy Pip about the sharks circling the ship. The song ignites a dance for the full crew, but rising tensions take over and a dangerous racial fight erupts. When Greenhorn suddenly sights a pod of whales, Starbuck is at last able to persuade Ahab to let the men hunt. Starbuck and Stubb harpoon whales, but Flask's boat is capsized and Pip is lost at sea.

On board the Pequod, an enormous whale is being butchered and the oil rendered in the burning tryworks. Flask tells Ahab that the search for Pip is under way, but Ahab thinks only of finding Moby Dick. As they butcher the whale, the crew imagines Pip lost and struggling in the heart of the sea. Flask tells Starbuck that many oil barrels are leaking and he goes below to tell Ahab they must find a port for repairs.

Ahab is unmoved by Starbuck's report, and is concerned only with the white whale. When Starbuck refuses to leave, Ahab grabs a musket and orders him to his knees. From afar, Greenhorn shouts that Pip has been found. Ahab orders Starbuck out of the cabin.

On deck, the crew listens to Greenhorn describe how Queequeg rescued Pip. As the men return to work, Greenhorn pleads with Starbuck to get help for Pip, who has gone mad. But, the first mate ignores him. Greenhorn observes how life really works on the ship and decides to befriend Queequeg.

Starbuck returns to Ahab's cabin, where he finds the captain asleep. He picks up the musket with which Ahab had threatened him and contemplates what he should do. Pull the trigger and he may survive to see his wife and child again. When Ahab cries out in his sleep, Starbuck replaces the musket and leaves the cabin.

ACT TWO

Scenes 1-3. Day Three: One year later

An enormous storm is approaching, but Stubb, Flask and the crew sing a jolly work song. From the mastheads, Greenhorn and Queequeg talk of traveling together to his native island. Greenhorn wants to learn Queequeg's language and write down their adventures. Suddenly, Queequeg collapses. The crew gets him down and Ahab announces he will take the masthead watch himself, as he wants to sight Moby Dick first.

Below deck, Queequeg tells Greenhorn that he is dying and asks that a coffin be built for him. Pip enters from the shadows and sings a lament, joined by Greenhorn.

The massive storm now surrounds the *Pequod*. As Ahab sings defiantly to the heavens, bolts of lightning engulf the ship and the masts glow with St. Elmo's fire. Ahab demands that the men hold their posts, promising them the white flame is a sign from heaven to guide them to the white whale. The crew is inspired once again by the captain, much to Starbuck's distress.

Scenes 4 to 7. Day Four: The next morning

The ship has made it through the storm. From afar, the voice of Gardiner, captain of the *Rachel*, calls out. He pleads with Ahab to help him search for his 12-year-old son who was lost in the storm, but Ahab refuses. Pip shouts to Gardiner of the *Pequod*'s own lost boy. Pip cuts himself and gets blood on Ahab's clothes. The captain orders the ship to sail on, leaving Gardiner behind. Ahab contemplates the heartless God who devastates so many lives and baptizes his new harpoon with Pip's blood.

Below deck, Greenhorn sees Queequeg's newly built coffin and contemplates the madness that seems to surround him.

On deck, Ahab and Starbuck gaze over the horizon. Ahab describes his forty years at sea and all he has left behind. And why? To what end? He cannot say. But he sees in Starbuck's eye a human soul and it touches him deeply. Starbuck seizes the moment and persuades Ahab that they should return to the wives and sons who wait for them in Nantucket.

Just as Ahab appears to relent, he sights Moby Dick on the horizon. Great excitement ensues and the whale boats are lowered. Ahab looks again in Starbuck's eye and orders him to stay on board. The crew declares its loyalty to Ahab. During the chase, Moby Dick destroys two whaleboats in succession, drowning their crews. Then, the *Pequod* is rammed and sunk, killing all aboard. Ahab's boat is then attacked and all but the captain jump or fall off. Finally alone with the white whale, Ahab cries out and stabs at Moby Dick before being dragged down into the sea.

Epilogue: Many days later

Greenhorn floats on Queequeg's coffin, barely alive, softly singing his lost friend's prayer. Gardiner calls from afar, thinking he has at last found his missing son. Instead, he learns that Ahab and all the crew of the *Pequod* have drowned, except for this one survivor.

The Characters

Captain Ahab: (tenor) Captain of the Pequod (a whaling ship). Ahab lost his leg while hunting Moby Dick, a white whale, and he is so obsessed with finding and killing the whale he has gone mad. He is unmoved by his crew's needs or the needs of the ship – he only thinks of Moby Dick. In the midst of his madness, he still able to inspire his crew to follow him on his quest. His obsession leads to his end, alone with Moby Dick in the sea.

Greenhorn: (tenor) Loner and newcomer to whaling. He befriends Queequeg and tries to learn as much as he can about his dangerous new profession. When Moby Dick rams and sinks the Pequod along with the other whaleboats, Greenhorn is the only survivor, left to float on the coffin made for Queequeg.

Starbuck: (baritone) The first mate on the Pequod. He is afraid his Captain's obsession with destroying Moby Dick will cause him to never again return home to his family. This fear, justified Ahab's growing madness, causes him to contemplate killing his Captain. Starbuck's humanity is the only thing that can reach Ahab and he is able to convince the Captain to stop the hunt and return home. However, in that moment Moby Dick is sighted and Ahab goes after the whale, ordering Starbuck to stay on board the Pequod.

Queequeg: (baritone) A harpooner on the Pequod, he rescues Pip when he falls overboard during a whale hunt. He is befriended by Greenhorn, the ship's newcomer, and falls ill while they are out to sea.

Flask: (tenor) A member of the Pequod crew

Stubb: (baritone) A member of the Pequod crew

Pip: (soprano) The young cabin boy aboard the Pequod. He goes overboard during a whale hunt but is rescued by members of the crew. He is injured, however, and goes mad.

Captain Gardiner: (baritone) Captain of the Rachel, another whaling vessel, who lost his 12 year old son in the same storm the Pequod survives. He asks Ahab to help search for his son, but Ahab is unmoved and continues to search for Moby Dick. When the Pequod has sunk, Captain Gardiner finds Greenhorn floating on Queequeg's coffin.

Links to Musical Excerpts:

San Francisco Opera Highlights: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9CmZ531N1s

Behind the scenes at the opera: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4e7E3hPrBo

Moby-Dick Act I Scene 7

Starbuck "Captain Ahab, I Must Speak With You"

Libretto by Gene Sheer

STARBUCK knocks at AHAB's cabin door.

STARBUCK
Captain Ahab? I must speak with you. Sir?

He opens the door. Ahab is asleep.

Ah. He is sleeping. He would have shot me.
There's the very musket he pointed at me.
Loaded? Aye. And powder in the pan.

He takes the musket off the wall.

He would have killed me with the very thing in my hands.

Aye. Would he fain kill all his crew?
My soul swears this ship will come to deadly harm.
What cares Ahab?

Is there no other way? No lawful way?
Make him a prisoner to be taken home?
Wrest the old man's living power from his own hands?
Only a fool would try it.
The men have vowed their vows.

Aye. Now all of us are Ahabs.

AHAB cries in his sleep like a child having a nightmare or in pain.

Oh, Lord, is it murder to srike a would-be murderer in his bed?
Oh, Lord, what shall I do?
One touch and Starbuck may survive
To see his wife and shild again.
Return to them alive.
Oh, Mary! Oh, my boy!
Great God, where art Thou now?

STARBUCK aims the gun at AHAB's head.

AHAB (still crying in his sleep)
Ah! Ah!

STARBUCK slowly lowers the gun and places it back on the wall. He leaves the room. The CREW hums on deck, QUEEQUEG chants, AHAB cries in his sleep. The brightly burning tryworks continue to glow as darkness covers everything.

Moby Dick

By

Herman Melville

Chapter 123: The Musket

During the most violent shocks of the Typhoon, the man at the Pequod's jaw-bone tiller had several times been reelingly hurled to the deck by its spasmodic motions even though preventer tackles had been attached to it- for they were slack- because some play to the tiller was indispensable.

In a severe gale like this, while the ship is but a tossed shuttlecock to the blast, it is by no means uncommon to see the needles in the compasses, at intervals, go round and round. It was thus with the Pequod's; at almost every shock the helmsman had not failed to notice the whirling velocity with which they revolved upon the cards; it is a sight that hardly anyone can behold without some sort of unwonted emotion.

Some hours after midnight, the Typhoon abated so much, that through the strenuous exertions of Starbuck and Stubb- one engaged forward and the other aft- the shivered remnants of the jib and fore and main-top-sails were cut adrift from the spars, and went eddying away to leeward, like the feathers of an albatross, which sometimes are cast to the winds when that storm-tossed bird is on the wing.

The three corresponding new sails were now bent and reefed, and a storm-trysail was set further aft; so that the ship soon went through the water with some precision again; and the course- for the present, East-south-east- which he was to steer, if practicable, was once more given to the helmsman. For during the violence of the gale, he had only steered according to its vicissitudes. But as he was now bringing the ship as near

her course as possible, watching the compass meanwhile, lo! a good sign! the wind seemed coming round astern; aye, the foul breeze became fair!

Instantly the yards were squared, to the lively song of "Ho! the fair wind! oh-ye-ho cheerly, men!" the crew singing for joy, that so promising an event should so soon have falsified the evil portends preceding it.

In compliance with the standing order of his commander- to report immediately, and at any one of the twenty-four hours, any decided change in the affairs of the deck,- Starbuck had no sooner trimmed the yards to the breeze- however reluctantly and gloomily,- that he mechanically went below to apprise Captain Ahab of the circumstance.

Ere knocking at his state-room, he involuntarily paused before it a moment. The cabin lamp- taking long swings this way and that- was burning fitfully, and casting fitful shadows upon the old man's bolted door,- a thin one, with fixed blinds inserted, in place of upper panels. The isolated subterraneousness of the cabin made a certain humming silence to reign there, though it was hooped round by all the roar of the elements. The loaded muskets in the rack were shiningly revealed, as they stood upright against the forward bulkhead. Starbuck was an honest, upright man; but out of Starbuck's heart, at that instant when he saw the muskets, there strangely evolved an evil thought; but so blent with its neutral or good accompaniments that for the instant he hardly knew it for itself.

"He would have shot me once," he murmured, "yes, there's the very musket that he pointed at me;- that one with the studded lock; let me touch it- lift it. Strange, that I, who have handled so many deadly lances, strange, that I should shake so now. Loaded? I must see. Aye, aye; and powder in the pan;- that's not good. Best spill it?- wait. I'll cure myself of this. I'll hold the musket boldly while I think.- I come to report a fair

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wind to him. But how fair? Fair for death and doom,- that's fair for Moby Dick. It's a fair wind that's only fair for that accursed fish.- The very tube he pointed at me!- the very one; this one- I hold it here; he would have killed me with the very thing I handle now.- Aye and he would fain kill all his crew. Does he not say he will not strike his spars to any gale? Has he not dashed his heavenly quadrant? and in these same perilous seas, gropes he not his way by mere dead reckoning of the error-abounding log? and in this very Typhoon, did he not swear that he would have no lightning-rods? But shall this crazed old man be tamely suffered to drag a whole ship's company down to doom with him?- Yes, it would make him the wilful murderer of thirty men and more, if this ship come to any deadly harm; and come to deadly harm, my soul swears this ship will, if Ahab have his way. If, then, he were this instant-put aside, that crime would not be his. Ha! is he muttering in his sleep? Yes, just there,- in there, he's sleeping. Sleeping? aye, but still alive, and soon awake again. I can't withstand thee, then, old man. Not reasoning; not remonstrance; not entreaty wilt thou hearken to; all this thou scornest. Flat obedience to thy own flat commands, this is all thou breathest. Aye, and say'st the men have vow'd thy vow; say'st all of us are Ahabs. Great God forbid!- But is there no other way? no lawful way?- Make him a prisoner to be taken home? What! hope to wrest this old man's living power from his own living hands? Only a fool would try it. Say he were pinioned even; knotted all over with ropes and hawsers; chained down to ring-bolts on this cabin floor; he would be more hideous than a caged tiger, then. I could not endure the sight; could not possibly fly his howlings; all comfort, sleep itself, inestimable reason would leave me on the long intolerable voyage. What, then, remains? The land is hundreds of leagues away, and locked Japan the nearest. I stand alone here upon an open sea, with two oceans and a whole continent between me and law.- Aye, aye, 'tis so.- Is heaven a murderer when its lightning strikes a would-be murderer in his bed, tindering sheets and skin together?- And would I be a murderer, then, if"- and slowly, stealthily, and half sideways looking, he placed the loaded musket's end against the door.

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"On this level, Ahab's hammock swings within; his head this way. A touch, and Starbuck may survive to hug his wife and child again.- Oh Mary! Mary!- boy! boy! boy!- But if I wake thee not to death, old man, who can tell to what unsounded deeps Starbuck's body this day week may sink, with all the crew! Great God, where art Thou? Shall I? shall I?- The wind has gone down and shifted, sir; the fore and main topsails are reefed and set! she heads her course."

"Stern all! Oh Moby Dick, I clutch thy heart at last!"

Such were the sounds that now came hurtling from out the old man's tormented sleep, as if Starbuck's voice had caused the long dumb dream to speak.

The yet levelled musket shook like a drunkard's arm against the panel; Starbuck seemed wrestling with an angel, but turning from the door, he placed the death-tube in its rack, and left the place.

"He's too sound asleep, Mr. Stubb; go thou down, and wake him, and tell him. I must see to the deck here. Thou know'st what to say."

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Name_____ Date_____

Moby-Dick

Activity Worksheet

Moby Dick the Opera Act I Scene 7	*Moby Dick* the Novel Chapter 123: The Musket

How are they alike?

How are they different?

Name_____ Date_____

Moby-Dick

Activity Worksheet

Write a summary describing the major similarities and differences between the musket scene in *Moby Dick* the novel and *Moby-Dick* the opera. How do the similarities and differences function to produce drama in both settings? Which setting do you think is more impactful? Why? Use extra paper, if necessary.