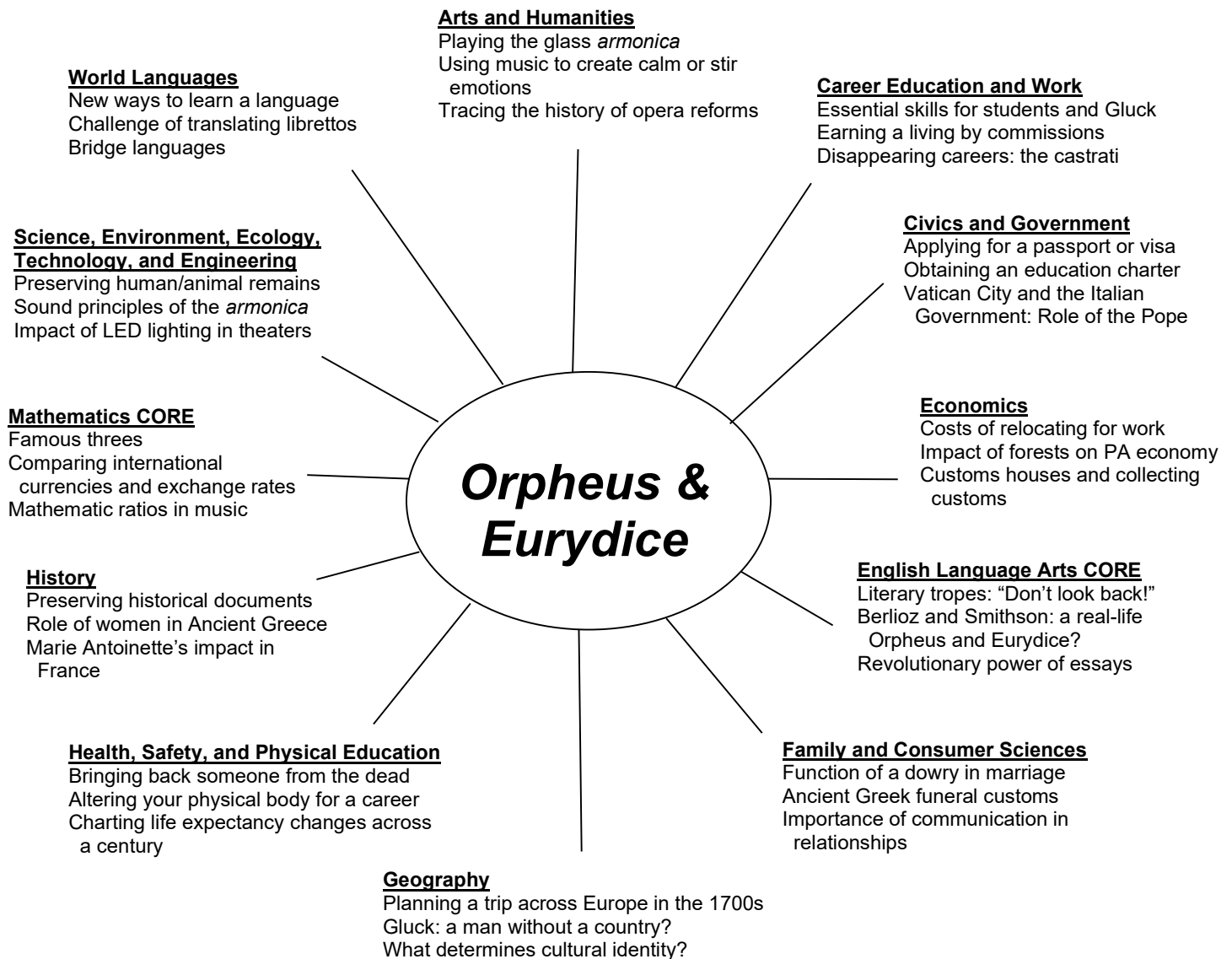


Curriculum Circle for *Orpheus & Eurydice*

How does *Orpheus & Eurydice* by Christoph Willibald Gluck, Pierre-Louis Moline, and Louis-Hector Berlioz intersect with all academic content areas?

Begin with the opera and brainstorm connections to all curricula.





Lesson Plan Stems for 2026–2027

Developed by Opera on TAP:

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Lesson Plan Stems for *Orpheus & Eurydice*

How does *Orpheus & Eurydice* by Christoph Willibald Gluck, Pierre-Louis Moline, and Louis-Hector Berlioz intersect with all academic content areas?

Begin with a lesson plan stem and connect the opera to classroom curricula.

NOTES: Suggested grade levels are listed to the right of each lesson plan stem.
PreK = Pre-Kindergarten, ES = elementary school, MS = middle school, HS = high school

Arts and Humanities

State Standards: 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4

In some countries, Gluck operas did not use trombones in his orchestras because not enough musicians could play them well. What is a trombone? Is it hard to play? PreK

Playing the harp is difficult. It has more than 44 strings and seven pedals. It's also a big instrument to move around. Look at some photos of a harp. What does it look like? Do you think Orpheus could carry a pedal harp with him to the underworld? Why or why not? PreK

Hector Berlioz was a French composer who decided to devote his life to music after hearing Gluck's *Orpheus & Eurydice*. His music uses a large orchestra. Listen to a short section of his *Symphonie fantastique* to identify some orchestra instruments. PreK

Gluck played a clavichord; it is pictured in his famous portrait. A clavichord is an instrument that looks like a piano but sounds different because of how the strings are hit. Look at some photos of clavichords and pianos, and listen to excerpts of each as they are played. Brainstorm a list of similarities and differences that you observe. PreK

Orpheus & Eurydice is an opera that tells a story from ancient Greek mythology. What kind of costumes should Orpheus and Eurydice be wearing so the audience can tell this is an ancient Greek story? Draw the costumes you imagine each should wear. PreK

The chorus and dancers in *Orpheus & Eurydice* play nymphs, shepherds, shepherdesses, demons, Furies, happy spirits, heroes, and heroines. How does that allow an opera with three singers to seem like a large cast? ES

- There is a famous 1775 portrait of Gluck playing his clavichord, painted by Joseph Duplessis. Before photographs were possible, how do we know what famous people looked like? Would Gluck have had to “sit” for the painting? ES
- Pittsburgh Opera will be producing and performing *Orpheus & Eurydice* for the first time. Why do you think the company has never performed the opera before? ES
- Gluck wrote operas that changed the style of and expectations for *opera seria* and *opera buffa*. What does each term mean? What would you expect to happen in an *opera seria* or an *opera buffa*? Which one—*seria* or *buffa*—does *Orpheus & Eurydice* most closely resemble? Why? ES
- In both the Italian and French versions, Orpheus's lyre is represented in the orchestra by the harp, and it was this use of the instrument in 1774 that it is thought to have introduced the harp to French orchestras. Is the harp used in orchestras today? What is a lyre? How does it differ from a modern harp? ES
- Depending on the number of strings on pedal harps (44 to 47 strings), lever harps (34 to 38 strings), or lap harps (14 to 27 strings), how would a player know which strings were which notes? Examine a harp. What do you notice about the strings? Why might that be important for learning to play this instrument? Does this remind you of any other stringed instrument? If so, why? ES
- In the opera, Orpheus's music charms the angry spirits who try to keep him from entering the underworld. Consider the famous quote that posits music has the power to soothe an angry soul. Do you believe that to be true? How is music used to calm someone or something down? Can the opposite be true; can music be used to call someone to action or anger someone or something? ES
- Gluck's work inspired Louis-Hector Berlioz (1803–1869,) who became a famous French Romantic composer, conductor, and critic. Berlioz's work includes orchestral compositions such as the *Symphonie fantastique* and *Harold in Italy*, three operas (*Benvenuto Cellini*, *Les Troyens*, and *Béatrice et Bénédict*), choral pieces, and works of hybrid genres such as the "dramatic symphony" *Roméo et Juliette* and the "dramatic legend" *La Damnation de Faust*. For which piece is Berlioz best remembered? ES/MS
- Orpheus & Eurydice* is the most popular of Gluck's works and it influenced other German operas. Variations on its plot—the underground rescue mission in which the hero must control, or conceal, his emotions—can be found in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Beethoven's *Fidelio*, and Wagner's *Das Rheingold*. What other musical works share these elements? What other musical works have become an influence on other performance or narrative arts? ES/MS
- A modern orchestra harp has pedals that allow the harp to play chromatic notes over a range of six and a half octaves. Compare that range to the range of a piano. Could a harp play piano music? Why or why not? ES/MS

In the mid-1700s when Gluck was beginning his career, there were competing styles of opera: French, Italian, and German. What is the difference between each style? Which ones did Gluck favor, and why? ES/MS

In Gluck's original *Orfeo ed Euridice* opera, one of the roles was sung by a castrato. Learn the history of castrati and how various vocal types could sing the role today. What is a trouser role or pants role? ES/MS

Orpheus & Eurydice is an opera based on Greek mythology. Brainstorm other movies, musicals, or operas that are also based on mythology. Why do you think mythology might make a good source for opera plots? ES/MS

Gluck made several changes to the orchestration of *Orpheus & Eurydice* when adapting it from his original Italian version to his French version. Cornetts and *chalmesaux* were replaced by more common (and modern) oboes and clarinets, while the trombone parts considerably decreased, possibly due to a lack of technical ability on the part of the French trombonists. Is it surprising that a composer would change a composition because of unskilled instrumentalists? Why else might a composer change his composition? Do modern composers adapt their work to the capabilities of the companies performing it? Why or why not? MS

Gluck received a commission to write for the world-famous castrato Caffarelli. What was a castrato? In what ranges did castratos, or *castrati*, sing? What roles did they perform? The last castrato of the Sistine Chapel died in 1922. Nowadays, who would sing the roles written for *castrati*? Using [Operabase | Opera Singers | Artists | Opera Companies | New & Rare Opera Performances](#), research how many arias of Gluck's time were written for *castrati* and how those roles are sung today. MS

Greek myths, such as the stories of *Orpheus and Eurydice*, are a collection of ancient folklore and religious stories that were originally spread through oral traditions. To ancient civilizations, these timeless tales helped explain the origins of the universe and the human condition. What is an oral tradition? How is it performed? What human conditions are evident in the *Orpheus* story? MS

Orpheus & Eurydice calls for three female singers, one of whom sings a male role. Orpheus is written for a contralto or countertenor. The Euridice and Amore roles are written for sopranos. Would the opera be considered a chamber opera? How many operas have a small cast of three? How many operas have only one leading role? MS

Gluck was revered by composers such as Mozart, Schubert, Berlioz, and Wagner for the radical reforms he brought to opera in the 1760s. What were the changes Gluck made? What guiding principles or ideas led to these changes? What other modern musicians or composers have also had a lasting impact on their profession? MS/HS

Pittsburgh Opera is creating a new production with projections for *Orpheus & Eurydice*. What steps must the Director of Production take to manage all the design elements? MS/HS

Orpheus and Eurydice has been adapted numerous times in multiple genres, including ballet, film and television, literature, music, song cycles, stage works, video games, and visual arts. Why would an artist choose this ancient myth to create works like Anaïs Mitchell's *Hadestown* and Ricky Ian Gordon's song cycle? MS/HS

Though originally set to an Italian libretto, *Orphée et Eurydice* owes much to French opera, particularly in its use of accompanied recitative and a general absence of vocal virtuosity. Twelve years after the 1762 premiere, Gluck adapted his opera to suit the tastes of a Parisian audience at the Académie Royale de Musique, with a libretto by Pierre-Louis Moline. This reworking was titled *Orphée et Eurydice*, and several alterations were made in vocal casting and orchestration to suit French tastes. Which version will Pittsburgh Opera use? How does an opera company decide which version to use? MS/HS

The musical *Hadestown* by Anaïs Mitchell blends versions of two ancient Greek myths, *Orpheus and Eurydice* and *Hades and Persephone*, to explore enduring and contemporary themes such as poverty. The musical has recently been released for high school performances in the United States. How could the musical be marketed to younger audiences? MS/HS

Some significant elements of the musical *Hadestown*, which was partly inspired by *Orpheus and Eurydice*, include workers, movement, flurry dances, and symbolism. In the musical, sometimes Hermes is cast as a man and sometimes a woman. Explore and compare the musical *Hadestown* to Gluck's *Orpheus Eurydice*. MS/HS

Orpheus & Eurydice is the first of Gluck's "reform" operas, in which he attempted to replace the abstruse plots and overly complex music of *opera seria* with a "noble simplicity" in both the music and the drama. Trace opera history to highlight eras when the genre experienced profound "reforms." HS

To supplement his earnings, Berlioz—who was inspired by Gluck—wrote musical journalism throughout much of his career; some of it has been preserved in book form, including his 1844 *Treatise on Instrumentation*, which was influential in the 19th and 20th centuries. Who updated the book after its initial publication? Is the book still in print? HS

Gluck was admired by other composers. His greatest French admirer was Hector Berlioz, whose epic *Les Troyens* may be seen as the culmination of the Gluckian tradition. Though Gluck wrote only one opera in German, his work influenced the German school of opera, particularly composers Carl Maria von Weber and Richard Wagner, whose concept of music drama was not so far removed from Gluck's own. Create a "river of influence" graphic to demonstrate how Gluck's ideas flowed into other countries and eras. HS

In Gluck's time, cornetts were instruments that were typically used for church music, and *chalumeaux* were predominant only in chamber music: both cornetts and *chalumeaux* were unpopular in France in 1774. What are cornetts and *chalumeaux*? In many ways the change from *chalumeaux* to oboes corresponds to that from castrati to high tenors. Neither castrati nor *chalumeaux* were to survive. Research other historical instruments that evolved into contemporary instruments or have faded away.

HS

Career Education and Work

State Standards: 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.4

In *Orpheus & Eurydice*, the chorus and dancers also play shepherds, shepherdesses, nymphs, demons, Furies, happy spirits, heroes, and heroines. Which part would you like to play? Why?

PreK

In the 1840s, the composer Hector Berlioz, who was inspired by Gluck, had difficulty making money in France, so he began working as the conductor for his music when it was performed abroad. Listen to some of his music. Practice conducting the beat.

PreK

Gluck's father worked in forests. Who works in forests and parks today?

PreK

The composer Gluck influenced other composers. He could be called a mentor. Which mentors do you know?

PreK/ES

In *Orpheus & Eurydice*, there are three female singers—one contralto and two sopranos. Which voice type is higher?

PreK/ES

In Gluck's childhood village, all his friends were trained in music. What skills are all students trained in nowadays? What skills do students who live in your neighborhood have?

ES

Orpheus's lyre is represented by the harp, an instrument that was popularized across Europe by Queen Marie Antoinette, who played the pedal harp. Is it unusual for a queen to play an instrument? Research modern queens; do any of them play an instrument?

ES

In 1737, Gluck moved to Milan and began studying with Giovanni Sammartini, who taught him "practical knowledge of all the instruments." To be a composer today, how many instruments do you need to know how to play? What would a "practical knowledge of all the instruments" include for an aspiring modern composer? What computer programs or other electronic components would a student need to learn in order to compose today? Where can a student learn to become a professional composer?

ES/MS

Gluck's father was a forest master, or forester, as we call the position today. How does a person become a forester? What education is needed? What does that job entail? How well does it pay? What are the positive and negatives of a career in forestry?

ES/MS

In 1774, Gluck returned to Vienna, where he was appointed composer to the imperial court after 20 years serving as Kapellmeister. Over the next few years, the internationally-famous composer traveled back and forth between Paris and Vienna. What is a Kapellmeister? Was it a lucrative position? Would a kapellmeister have traveled for his job?	ES/MS
In 1745, Gluck was invited to become the house composer for London's King's Theater. What is a house composer? Does that kind of occupation still exist? If so, where? What responsibilities are part of that position? Could someone make a living as a house composer, or is it not considered a full-time position?	ES/MS
Gluck signed a contract for six stage works with the management of the Paris Opéra. What is a contract? What items are usually stipulated in a music contract? How are finances stipulated in a music contract?	ES/MS
Gluck's musical heir in Paris was the composer Antonio Salieri, who had been Gluck's protégé. What is a protégé? How does one become someone's protégé? Do professional musicians and artists still have protégés? What position or program is most like being someone's protégé?	ES/MS
Though he met only occasional success in France, the composer Berlioz was highly regarded in Germany, Britain, and Russia both as a composer and as a conductor. Are there musicians today who both compose and conduct? Did Gluck compose and conduct? Research some modern composers, and report what you find.	ES/MS
<i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> (Italian), <i>Orphée et Eurydice</i> (French), and <i>Orpheus & Eurydice</i> (English) are different names for an opera composed by Christoph Willibald Gluck, based on the myth of <i>Orpheus</i> and set to a libretto by a Ranieri de' Calzabigi. How many creators were involved in all of the versions? How did their work on <i>Orpheus</i> fit into their careers?	MS
Gluck was commissioned by heads of state and private individuals to write music for weddings, festivals, and name days. What is a commission? Who sponsors commissions? How does an artist make a living from commissions? Gluck also received patronage from individuals and heads of state. What is the difference between patronage and commissions? Does patronage still exist as a means for artists to earn a living?	MS/HS
In 1774 the French version of <i>Orphée et Eurydice</i> was performed with the title role transposed from that of a castrato to the tenor voice. When were castrati no longer performing?	MS/HS
Hector Berlioz, who was inspired to compose by Gluck's opera, initially studied medicine before switching to study music at the Paris Conservatoire. His intensely personal, hyper-romantic, and sometimes bizarre personality often matched the dramatic and unconventional nature of his music. He was also a pioneering conductor and an influential music critic, writing for the <i>Journal des Débats</i> for more than three decades. Is his career path typical?	MS/HS

Civics and Government

State Standards: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4

Orpheus & Eurydice takes place in Greece, whose leader is a Prime Minister. What is the leader of the government called in the United States? PreK

If United States citizens wanted to travel to Greece (where the Orpheus story takes place) visit Gluck's home country of Germany, they would need a passport. What does a passport look like? PreK

Gluck may have attended a Jesuit school when he was younger. Types of schools in the United States include public, charter, private, religious, and military. What kind of school do you attend? Who is in charge of your school? Who is in charge of your classroom? PreK

Gluck lived in several different cities, including London, throughout his lifetime. If Gluck were alive today, what sort of papers or official documents would he need to live in a country where he was not a citizen? Can anyone just live wherever they want now? ES

In 1756, Gluck was given the title *Knight of the Golden Spur*, an honor in the Holy Roman Empire. What is a knight? What comes to mind when you hear about knights? Can a musician be a knight? Why or why not? ES

One of Gluck's most influential pupils was Marie Antoinette. Who was Marie Antoinette? For what was she famous? How did she assist Gluck's career? Why was she able to assist him? What was her role in the French government? ES

Gluck's professional patrons were members of monarchies and noble classes in different European countries. What is a monarchy? How does it differ from the kind of government that the United States has? Are all monarchies the same? Explore the British, French, and Viennese monarchies from the 1740s through the 1780s, when Gluck was composing. How did monarchies differ? ES/MS

Gluck traveled extensively throughout Europe. Starting in 2027, an American visiting Europe will need to apply for a travel visa before he or she can leave the country. What is a visa, and why is it needed? What different kinds of visa can travelers apply for? Where does a traveler from the United States apply for a visa? What documents are needed to be granted a visa? Would Gluck have had to have a visa to travel in his time? ES/MS

In 1787, the year Gluck died, Hugh Henry Brackenridge obtained a charter from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for his Pittsburgh Academy, soon to be known as the University of Pittsburgh, making this school the oldest continuously chartered institution of learning west of the Allegheny mountains. What is a charter? What is the process to obtain a charter? Does the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania still issue charters? Do all states have the ability to issue charters? Does the federal government have the ability to issue a charter? ES/MS

Though Gluck's opera is set in ancient Greece, the current Greek government is a unitary parliamentary republic led by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis of the center-right New Democracy party. Explore the platform of the Prime Minister's party and compare to the two major United States political parties. MS

Many facts about Gluck's family and early life remain unclear, including his exact date of birth, as no birth certificate exists for him. In the United States, how are official records kept nowadays? Who or what institutions are responsible for gathering or maintaining these records? What electronic programs are used to record essential facts about a person's life? Explore a service that helps people discover more about their family's history, such as [Ancestry® | Family Tree, Genealogy & Family History Records](#). How do these services gather information about an individual and family background? What kinds of records are used to put together a family tree and story? Are all these records available and accessible to the public online? MS

In 1756, Gluck was knighted by Pope Benedict XIV. What does it mean to be knighted? What does it mean to be a knight of the Roman Catholic church? How can a pope create a knight, when usually that is done by a monarch? Explore the power or governing structure of the Vatican and Vatican City. What role does the pope play in governance? The Vatican is in Rome. What role or authority does the pope hold in the Italian government? MS/HS

Pierre-Louis Moline (1739–1820) was a prolific French dramatist, poet, and librettist, who authored one of the longest-running patriotic plays during the French Revolution. He is best remembered today for having adapted Calzabigi's libretto for Gluck's *Orphée et Euridice*. How did the French Revolution change the government of France? MS/HS

In the mid-1700s, Gluck came to prominence working for the Habsburg court in Vienna. What was the House of Habsburg, and how did it become so influential? Trace the history of the House of Habsburg, from its inception in the 11th century forward. Are there any branches of the Habsburg family lines still alive? If so, does the House of Habsburg remain politically, financially, and/or culturally significant? HS

Economics

State Standards: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5

Sometimes people move to a new house and location because of getting a better job. Gluck moved because of his work. Who do you know that has moved because of work? PreK

The *Orpheus & Eurydice* opera is an adaptation of a very old myth. Short stories such as myths are often printed together in larger collections. Choose a favorite short story, like “The Gingerbread Man,” which might be printed as part of different story collections in several different books. How much does each different story collection cost? Why do you think different story collections might cost different amounts of money, even if they contain the same story? PreK

Gluck wrote music for “name days”, which are days associated with a biblical character or saint. If you wanted music for your birthday, would you need to pay someone to compose it? What does it cost to purchase a song from an online service such as iTunes or Spotify? How much do you think a composer should charge for writing a song just for you? PreK/ES

In both the Italian and French versions of the opera, Orpheus's lyre is represented by the harp. What does a pedal harp cost? How much money is needed for an orchestra to maintain a pedal harp, or does the musician cover the cost of this instrument? If you wanted to learn the harp, create a one-year budget for purchasing and maintaining the instrument, in addition to the cost of lessons. What does a professional harpist earn in one year? Do you think playing a harp would be a good way to earn a living? Why or why not? ES

Marie Antoinette was one of Gluck's pupils. Did she pay for her harp lessons, or were her lessons a way for Gluck to be introduced to other wealthy members of her court? What kind of system trades goods or services for payment instead of money? How successful or important are these kinds of systems for a community's economy? ES

Gluck's father was a forest master. How important are trees to a local community's economy? Who pays to maintain the trees in state parks today? Are communities that have a lot of trees or are located near parks more expensive to live in than ones without trees? Who pays to care for trees around schools and homes? ES

Orpheus & Eurydice calls for a professional harpist in the orchestra. A concert-grade pedal harp has more strings and pedals than a lever harp or lap harp. How much would each cost? How much would harp lessons cost? Create a graphic organizer to compare the cost of learning to play an orchestra harp to other orchestral instruments. Include instrument cost, music cost, lessons, transportation, and repairs. ES/MS

In 1814, the year in which Gluck's librettist Guillard died, a fire destroyed London's Custom House. What is a custom house, and what are customs duties? Why are these collected? How significant are customs to a country's economy? Do active custom houses still exist today? How are customs currently collected? ES/MS

As his operas were not appreciated by Frederick II of Prussia, Gluck relocated to Paris and was granted patronage from Marie Antoinette, who in 1770 had married the future French King Louis XVI. With the support of the French court, Gluck signed a contract for six stage works with the management of the Paris Opéra. How often do modern workers have to move to find better work? Which kinds of work require the most relocation? How much does moving to another state or country cost? How does worker relocation impact a city or state's economy? Which states are losing workers, and which are gaining? MS

Gluck's father was a forest master, or what we would call a forester today. Why do forests need to be managed? What role do forests play in the United States economy? How many forests does the federal government own? The word Pennsylvania translates as "Penn's Woods." Who granted these woods to William Penn? Why were these lands granted to him, and for what purpose were they to be used? How many forests does the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania own? How significant are the forests to Pennsylvania's modern economy? MS/HS

Gluck was commissioned to write music for royal weddings and name days. How important are royal celebrations to a nation's economy nowadays? Consider an event, such as Britain's Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. How do these spectacles support different industries in the host country? Does the benefit of these events outweigh the cost of hosting them? MS/HS

English Language Arts

State Standards: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5

Greek myths are old stories that feature gods, heroes, and monsters. What are gods, heroes, and monsters? What comes to mind when you think about these characters? What do they look like? Read some simplified Greek myths about *Pandora's Box*, *King Midas and the Golden Touch*, *Icarus and Daedalus*, and *Perseus and Medusa*. What is the best part of each story? PreK

In *Orpheus & Eurydice*, the chorus and dancers play nymphs, shepherds, shepherdesses, demons, Furies, happy spirits, heroes, and heroines. What are nymphs, demons, and Furies? Are they real? Learn some words that rhyme with nymph. PreK

Only a few feet away from the exit, Orpheus lost his faith and turned to see Eurydice behind him, sending her back to be trapped in Hades's Underworld forever. What does it mean to be trapped? What does forever mean? PreK

The opera *Orpheus & Eurydice* is a retelling of an old story. Choose a familiar story, like “The Three Little Pigs” or “Cinderella”, and tell it in a new way. To get ideas, listen to “The Three Little Javelinas” by Susan Lowell (American Southwest variation), “The Three Little Tamales” by Eric A. Kimmel (Latin American), or “The Three Little Sun Bears” by Taft & Nicole Whittingham (Asia).

PreK/ES

The *Orpheus & Eurydice* opera is an adaptation of an ancient Greek myth. Retelling a story in a different style of genre could have benefits AND challenges. What would they be?

ES

Greek myths are often categorized into myths of origins and gods, heroes and monsters, or tragic love and hubris. Which myths are best known? Why? In which category would you place *Orpheus and Eurydice*? Why?

ES

Learn some vocabulary from the opera:

ES/MS

Amorous	Intrepid	Myth	Shade
Decree	Labyrinth	Oblivion	Traitor
Fidelity	Lament	Obsession	Underworld
Heartbreaking	Lyre	Passion	Urn
<i>Idée fixe</i>	Mournful	Repose	Version

What literary themes are evident in the story of *Orpheus and Eurydice*? Consider what love does in this story, as well as how Orpheus and Eurydice behave and feel about their experiences. What do the themes you discover have to tell us about human nature, and how we relate to others and our world? What other great stories also include these themes? Consider, too, the fact that Gluck gave his version of the story a happy ending, which is different from the actual myth. Why would he change the ending, and how does this change add to our understanding of themes in this opera?

ES/MS

In Greek mythology, Orpheus lost his faith only a few feet away from the exit, when he turned back to see Eurydice. This error sends her back to the underworld forever. Does this ending automatically make the legend a tragedy? Have any adaptations to the myth changed the ending to a good outcome? What works of literature include a tragic ending where someone is trapped or lost forever?

ES/MS

The story of *Orpheus* has had many retellings and adaptations over the centuries. Why? How does retelling an old story allow creators to challenge expectations, shift perspectives, or reflect modern themes? How does retelling an old story from a different cultural perspective provide new insights?

ES/MS

Orpheus and Eurydice is a prominent story in Greek mythology that would have been told through an oral tradition. What is an oral tradition? In what cultures are oral traditions found? How are oral traditions important to various cultures? What are the challenges of an oral tradition? Compare oral traditions to the shaping of folk songs. Does each serve a similar purpose?

ES/MS

In Greek myths, how did Gods influence mortals? In new translations, such as *Odyssey*, or adaptations, such as the film *Odyssey*, how have the relationships between gods and mortals been treated or changed? MS

Gluck, the composer of *Orpheus & Eurydice*, is credited with bringing a “sea change” to the world of opera. The phrase “sea change” is called an idiom. What is an idiom? What does the idiom “sea change” mean? What English writer originated that expression, and what is the text source for it? How many other common English idioms are credited to the same writer and/or source? MS

The legend of *Orpheus and Eurydice* concerns the tragic love of Orpheus of Thrace for the beautiful Eurydice. Orpheus was the son of Oeagrus and the Muse Calliope, though in some myths he is considered the son of Apollo. What is a muse? Who were the Greek muses and how do they figure into Greek mythology? How do we use the term “muse” today? Explore Orpheus’s genealogy in Greek myths. MS

In the myth of *Orpheus and Eurydice*, Hades grants Orpheus’s desire to bring Eurydice back from the dead, but with two conditions: she must walk behind him the whole time and he is forbidden to look back while guiding his wife out of the underworld. This “don’t look back” directive is a literary trope, or common plot device, that not only moves the story forward, but also reveals important information about characters and themes. Brainstorm a list of stories, tales, movies, etc., that use this trope. What does this trope test in the characters that confront it? Overall, are characters generally successful, or do they all “fail the test”? What might this trope have to say about humans and the human condition? MS/HS

Famous Greek myths are foundational tales of ancient gods, monsters, and heroes that explain natural phenomena and human nature. They form a massive body of stories covering everything from how the world was created to epic tales of the Trojan War. How have Greek myths influenced literature throughout the centuries? MS/HS

According to *Playbill*, the adapted musical *Hadestown: Teen Edition* was the second most-performed school play in the 2025–2026 school year. Why do you think this adaptation of the Orpheus myth is still so popular? What parts of the original *Hadestown*—and by extension the myth—have been altered to suit a school-aged audience? What other Greek myths might be adapted to make a good musical? Why? Would anything from the original myths have to be changed to suit a school-aged audience, or updated to reflect modern sensibilities? Pick a scene from a Greek myth of your choosing and recreate it as musical theater script and libretto. Write a musical number that explored the feelings of key characters in this scene. What have you discovered about these characters through your writing about them in song and dialogue? MS/HS

Listen to three different musical interpretations of the *Orpheus and Eurydice* myth: Gluck's opera *Orpheus & Eurydice*, Anaïs Mitchell's adaptation of the myth *Hadestown*, and the video game soundtrack for *Hades*. How does the music of each portray sorrow, trust, and the tension between nature and death? Select specific excerpts that you feel display sorrow, trust, and tension, and explain your choices in writing. Read some reviews of *Hadestown* and the video game *Hades* to analyze critics' responses to these contemporary retellings of Greek mythology. How significant was the music in the critics' responses?

MS/HS

According to Phaedrus, in Plato's *Symposium* the gods in the Underworld only "presented an apparition" of Eurydice to Orpheus, and Plato's Orpheus is cast as a coward. Examine and compare both versions of the myth. Why is Orpheus a coward in one, and a hero in another? How does Orpheus's punishment and subsequent death in the Plato version fit the view that his love for Eurydice wasn't true? How does this version change our understanding of the significance of Orpheus's story? Why do you think this myth, with all its different versions, remains so popular?

HS

After a concert he once gave jointly with Gluck, Handel publicly criticized Gluck's performance, claiming the composer "knows no more of contrapunto than my cook." What does it mean to be an artistic, theatrical, or literary critic? What is the difference between critique and criticism? How important are critics to literary and artistic performers? What do critics have to know and understand before they are considered professional critics? Where do professional critics publish their work nowadays? How has social media informed or changed the work of professional critics?

HS

At the age of twenty-four, Berlioz fell in love with the Irish actress Harriet Smithson, and he pursued her obsessively for seven years until she finally accepted him. Their marriage was happy at first but eventually foundered. Harriet inspired his first major success, the *Symphonie fantastique*, in which an idealized depiction of her occurs throughout as an *idée fixe*. What does "accepted him" mean? What is an *idée fixe*? In what other art works does *idée fixe* appear? Berlioz was greatly influenced by Gluck. In what ways might his relationship with Smithson be seen to resemble the Greek myth of *Orpheus and Eurydice*?

HS

Francesco Algarotti's *Essay on the Opera* (1755) was a major influence in the development of Gluck's reformist ideology. What is an essay? Why was this particular essay so influential? What does it mean to "reform"? Should reformist ideology empathize with gradual, systematic improvements or abrupt, revolutionary changes? What other essays have inspired reforms and revolutions?

HS

Family and Consumer Sciences

State Standards: 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4

Amore is the god of love in *Orpheus & Eurydice*. What does it mean to love someone? How can family members show their love to each other? PreK

Furies and ghosts try to deny Orpheus's passage to the underworld. Are the Furies and ghosts real? What real challenges keep us from going from one place to another? PreK

In *Orpheus & Eurydice*, Amore keeps Orpheus from harming himself and she allows Eurydice to live. What can we do to keep friends from hurting themselves? PreK/ES

Gluck's full name as listed on his baptismal certificate was Christophorus Willibaldus Ritter von Gluck, but he never used the Willibald and preferred to be called Christoph. What is your full, given name? Do any of your names come from other family members? What do you prefer to be called? PreK/ES

In *Orpheus & Eurydice*, Orpheus is so upset by Eurydice's second death that he plans to kill himself. Luckily, the god Amore stops him, and in response to his deep love and devotion, Amore then revives Eurydice for a second time. All three characters return to Earth where they celebrate the power of love. Is love a powerful emotion? What other powerful emotions are not so positive? How can we learn to control our emotions? ES

In *Orpheus & Eurydice*, Amore is the god of love. How does someone fall in love? Is there an external force that causes one to love? ES

Orpheus fell in love with Eurydice, a woman of beauty and grace, whom he married and lived with happily for a short time. How is love expressed at weddings? How does someone make arrangements for marriage? ES

In *Orpheus & Eurydice*, Furies and ghosts try to deny Orpheus's passage to the underworld. What are real challenges that keep people from reaching their goals? How do we overcome challenges? ES

Greece is known for its wine. The word grapevines often appears in the names of Greek restaurants, and the actual vines are often used for décor. What are some typical Greek foods? Research Greek food festivals in the Pittsburgh area. ES

According to Phaedrus in Plato's *Symposium*, Orpheus is considered to be a coward because instead of killing himself to join Eurydice in death, he tried to subvert the gods' will by sneaking into the underworld to get her back alive. What is a coward? How does someone learn bravery? ES/MS

Gluck had official and assumed names. What is an assumed name, and why would someone have one? Does anyone close to you or your family have an assumed name? Which celebrities and athletes have assumed names? What legal ramifications could be caused by taking an assumed name? ES/MS

In Greek mythology, the legend of *Orpheus and Eurydice* concerns the tragic love of Orpheus of Thrace for the beautiful Eurydice. Orpheus was the son of Oeagrus and the Muse Calliope, though in some myths he is considered the son of Apollo. Study some characters' family trees in Greek myths. How many characters are related to the gods? How many are royalty? Trace your own family tree. To whom are you related? How far back can you trace your family tree?

ES/MS

At the onset of this opera, Eurydice dies from a snakebite. What would ancient Greek funeral rituals have been? How would Eurydice's body have been prepared for her funeral? What comprises a modern funeral in Western cultures? What ceremonies are performed? How are bodies prepared for funerals? What state laws for disposal of a corpse must be followed once someone has died?

MS/HS

During a stay in Prague, an impoverished Gluck married Maria Anna Bergin, the 18-year-old daughter of a rich Viennese merchant. Though the marriage was by all accounts a loving and successful union, it was initially opposed by the bride's father, whose sudden death in 1750 made the union possible. What were the conditions of the dowry and marriage settlement reached between Gluck and his mother-in-law? What is a dowry? Was it important? Are marriage settlements and dowries still bequeathed today? Was marrying for money a common practice? What are the reasons for marriage?

MS/HS

Eurydice's second death may be considered a failure of communication: though Orpheus is following Amore's condition that he not to look at Eurydice while he leads her out from the Underworld, he never explains why he behaves this way. Eurydice thus decides that Orpheus must no longer love her because he won't explain his behavior, and she becomes inconsolable, causing him to violate Amore's directive. How important is communication in a long-term relationship, such as marriage? Do Orpheus and Eurydice truly trust each other? Based on their actions, is their love for each other one that can withstand challenges? Why or why not? How can couples communicate their feelings? How can people build trust with each other?

HS

Geography

State Standards: 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4

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|--|---------|
| In Greek mythology, the Elysian Fields was a paradise. What is paradise? Tell what paradise would include. | PreK |
| Orpheus was born in Thrace. Locate Greece on a map or globe. Learn to find north on a map or globe. Does Thrace appear on the map in the north of Greece? What geographical features define this area? | PreK |
| Gluck lived in the country and several cities. What is a city? How do cities compare to the country? What do you expect to find in each place? | PreK |
| Gluck traveled many places in Europe, including Prague, Vienna, and Italy. Which of those places are cities? Which places are countries? | PreK/ES |
| <i>Orpheus & Eurydice</i> takes place in both Thrace and the Underworld. Which are actual locations you can find on a map? How are Thrace and the Underworld described? | ES |
| Orpheus's homeland of ancient Thrace is bordered by the Aegean, Black, and Marmara Seas. What is a sea? How are seas depicted on a globe? How would Orpheus travel across a sea? The Black Sea is an inland sea reached by two straits: the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. What is a strait? Why are they important? What other straits can you find on a map? | ES |
| Gluck's father was a forest master. What is a forest? What would you find in a forest? What makes a forest a good place for certain plants, animals, or insects to live? Have you ever visited a forest? Draw a picture of what lives in a forest. | ES |
| In 1774 the French version of <i>Orphée et Eurydice</i> was performed in Paris. Gluck then returned to Vienna, where he was appointed composer to the imperial court. Over the next few years, the now internationally-famous composer traveled back and forth between Paris and Vienna. Trace his travels on a map and determine the length of each journey, his probable mode(s) of transportation, and how much time each trip would have taken. Consider how road conditions, weather, and lack of artificial lighting would impact his journey. How long would such a trip take today? What modes of transport are available now that weren't available to Gluck? | ES/MS |
| Gluck lived in several countries and spoke several languages, so some people say he was a "man without country". What does it mean to be without a country? What country do you live in? Have you visited other countries? What makes a place feel like you belong to it? | ES/MS |
| As a 14-year-old, Gluck traveled to Prague to learn music. Do teenagers today travel long distances away from home to study? Give examples of schools where teens can study away from home. | ES/MS |

Gluck was born in an area that was called Bohemia in his time. What is Bohemia called now? To what other countries or kingdoms has Bohemia belonged in the past? Plot on a map all the places where Gluck lived. Where is Gluck buried? If Gluck needed a passport, from which country would you say he was a citizen?

ES/MS

In Greek mythology, the Elysian Fields (or Elysium) was the paradise reserved for the gods' favorites, heroic figures, and the highly virtuous. As the mythological equivalent of heaven, it offered an eternal, joyful afterlife free from sorrow or toil. Is there an actual place that is paradise? Find some areas on earth that are Eden-like. Why do these places seem to be paradise?

ES/MS

Orpheus was born in an area of ancient Greece known as Thrace. Find the location of ancient Thrace on a map. What geographical and geological features and boundaries did it have? What countries are located in this same area in modern times? What products and agriculture is this area known for? How have these borders changed over time? Are they stable now, or have the boundaries been shifting again in current years?

ES/MS

Gluck's cultural identity changed during his lifetime—he lived in multiple countries, spoke several languages, composed operas in several languages, and adhered to a variety of political movements. Compare his life story to that of another famous composer of your choosing. Design a visual or a graphic organizer to compare both composers, placing important facts on world map locations. What would you consider to be your own cultural identity? Add elements of your life story to your organizer.

MS/HS

Orpheus was born in Thrace, making him a Thracian. In the ancient world, who were the Thracian people? How were they viewed by the ancient Romans and Greeks? What were they known for? What were the hallmarks of their culture and customs, and how did these differ from Athenian, Macedonia, and Roman customs? How did the geography of their homeland impact their culture?

HS

Health, Safety, and Physical Education

State Standards: 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5

An *idée fixe* is an idea that stays in someone's mind for a long time. What ideas do you remember for a long time? PreK

Nymphs and shepherds lament the death of Eurydice, who was bitten by a snake. What are ways to prevent snake bites? Are all snakes dangerous? Have you ever seen a live snake? PreK

Orpheus had to follow directions to get into the Underworld to rescue Eurydice. What are some basic directions you must know in order to go somewhere? Do you know your right hand from your left? Practice following directions with a classmate by hiding an object, then giving your partner directions to find it. PreK

Orpheus plays a lyre, which is a small harp. What parts of your body do you use to play a small harp or other stringed instruments such as a guitar? What kind of exercise can one get by playing a musical instrument? Do some instruments provide more exercise than others? PreK/ES

In this opera, Orpheus's lyre is represented by the harp. Because harp players use their fingertips repeatedly on the strings, they sometimes develop calluses. What are calluses? Is there a way to prevent them? How should callused skin be treated? ES

Gluck suffered from ailments connected to his heart. Where is your heart located in your body? What does your heart do? Have you ever heard your own heartbeat? What does your heart sound like? Can you clap in rhythm to your heartbeat? ES

An *idée fixe* may also be known as an obsession. Explore mental health issues with and definitions of obsession. ES/MS

When Orpheus loses Eurydice to the Underworld a second time, he believes he cannot live without her and decides to kill himself. Amore appears and prevents him from committing suicide. What should we do today if we think someone is contemplating suicide? What supports exist for helping someone suffering from this kind of despair? ES/MS

In response to Orpheus's deep love and devotion, Amore revives Euridice for the second time. Is it possible to revive someone who is dead? What is CPR? What is an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) and how is it used? ES/MS

Gluck suffered from high blood pressure. What is high blood pressure, compared to normal blood pressure? What causes it? What happens if someone has high blood pressure? How do people know if they have high blood pressure? How can blood pressure be regulated? MS

Later in life, Gluck and his wife settled in Perchtoldsdorf, an area near Vienna famous for its wine. What is the effect of wine on the human body? How does your body process wine? Is wine considered “good” for people? Why or why not? MS

The first performer to sing the role of Orpheus was the famous castrato Gaetano Guadagni. What was a castrato? Why did performers choose this? Are there castrati alive today? Though modern singers do not choose this path, there are other ways in which professionals in different kinds of careers might alter their bodies for their work. Brainstorm ways in which people modify, enhance, or change their physical selves for work. How does Western society view these kinds of changes? MS/HS

In 1787 while lunching with friends, Gluck suffered a heart arrhythmia and died a few hours later, at the age of 73. Nowadays, is 73 considered old? What is the current life expectancy for men in the United States? What is the current life expectancy for women? How has life expectancy changed in the last 100 years? Create a graphic organizer to show life expectancy changes over the last century. What factors influence and contextualize the data for these charts? MS/HS

It is known that prior to his marriage, Gluck contracted a venereal disease from an opera company soprano. What are some common venereal diseases that still pose a problem today? What are the symptoms of venereal disease? If left untreated, what do these diseases do? How would venereal disease have been treated in Gluck’s time? How are they treated now? HS

History

State Standards: 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4

Orpheus & Eurydice is a very old story told many times. What stories do your parents or grandparents tell over and over? PreK

What is the difference between a legend, a myth, and true history? What are some legends about Pittsburgh? What is a true historical fact about Pittsburgh? PreK/ES

Orpheus and Eurydice is a story about an event that affects the famous son of the King of Thrace and the Muse Calliope. What is the history of your family? What are some important events that have happened in your life? ES

Some of Gluck’s compositions were lost in a fire. If your house caught on fire, what important items would you want to save? Why would you choose these items? What do these items tell about you or your family? ES

Orpheus & Eurydice was first performed at the Burgtheater in Vienna on October 5, 1762, in the presence of Empress Maria Theresa for the name day celebrations of the Emperor Francis I. What is a name day? Is it the same as a birthday? How do we celebrate birthdays? ES

Only half of Gluck's life's work survived an 1809 fire that occurred 22 years after his death. What other famous fires have claimed important historical documents? How are important documents protected from destruction and decay nowadays? Investigate the measures taken by museums and other archives to protect old documents. How are they handled? How are they stored? How are they viewed? Who may have access to them?

ES/MS

One of Gluck's most famous music students was Marie Antoinette, and under his tutelage, she became an accomplished musician and vocalist. Who was Marie Antoinette? Why is she an important historical figure? How is she remembered today?

ES/MS

What were the roles and social expectations of women such as Eurydice in ancient Greek societies? Compare women's roles from different parts of the ancient world: Athens, Sparta, Mycenae, and Thrace. Create a graphic organizer to illustrate your findings.

MS/HS

In Greek mythology, the legend of *Orpheus and Eurydice* concerns the tragic love of Orpheus of Thrace for the beautiful Eurydice. The subject is among the most frequently retold of all Greek myths. Even though the story is a myth, explore how the myth is referenced in Greek and world history.

MS/HS

Gluck's *Orpheus & Eurydice* showed the beginnings of his reforms to opera. Gluck believed that opera should focus on telling stories of human passions, and that the story, which had become a vehicle for select star singers to show off their skills, should instead be as important as the music. How significant is *Orpheus & Eurydice* in opera history? Could the work be considered a pivot point in music history? Consider the 18th century in which Gluck was writing, a time known as the Age of Enlightenment, which is another pivot point in history. How do Gluck's opera reforms reflect some of the philosophies and discoveries of this period?

HS

Mathematics

State Standards: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

Orpheus & Eurydice is an opera in three acts. Find examples of other items that come in groups of three. What is the special name we use for a grouping of three, such as three people singing together?

PreK

Gluck used few melismas in *Orpheus & Eurydice*. In music, a melisma is when someone sings a lot of notes on one syllable. Practice singing "Mary had a little lamb" the regular way, with one note on each syllable. Try singing several notes on each syllable to make a new tune.

PreK

Listen as your music teacher plays both a diatonic and a chromatic scale on the piano. Listen again, but this time count the number of notes played. How many notes did you hear your teacher play for each scale?

PreK

Gluck lived to be 73 years old. Is that a long life? Do you know anyone who has lived more than 70 years? PreK

Professional opera singers in *Orpheus & Eurydice* are only paid for the performances they sing, whereas other workers are paid by the hour. How does someone keep track of hours worked? How can someone keep track of chores completed? Make a chart to keep track of the songs you sing at school. PreK/ES

Though it remains a popular opera in modern repertoire, *Orpheus & Eurydice* originally premiered in 1762, in Vienna at the Burgtheater. The French version opened in Paris in 1774. Calculate how many years passed between the two versions, and how many years there are between those two versions and the 2026 Pittsburgh Opera performances. ES

Melisma (a vocal run or *coloratura*) is the technique of singing multiple notes on a single syllable of text. When Gluck reformed opera, particularly with *Orpheus & Eurydice*, he included no long melismas in the singing parts. Listen to some examples of melismas in classical and popular music: ES

- George Frideric Handel's "Messiah" features a melisma on the word "shake" (from the aria "*Thus saith the Lord*"), where the singer rapidly navigates 25 notes on a single syllable to create word-painting.
- The Christmas carol "Angels We Have Heard on High," which stretches the first syllable of the word "Gloria" across 16 notes.
- Aretha Franklin's classic "Respect" frequently uses syllables extended over varying pitches, heavily influencing modern vocalists.

As you listen to melismas, count the number of different notes sung on one syllable. How long does it take for each singer to say an actual word when they sing this way? Why do you think Gluck wanted to limit melismas in his operas?

When studying historical figures, teachers often create a timeline of important events that happened in that person's life. Create a one-week timeline for yourself and your family. What important events have happened in the last seven days? ES/MS

Though only half of Gluck's work survived an 1809 fire, his musical production is impressive. Identify and chart the number of operas as well as other musical works. Create a second graphic to compare Gluck's output to those of several composers who admired his work: Mozart, Berlioz, von Weber, and Wagner. Which types of charts or graphs will best communicate these comparisons? MS

Gluck was a very prolific composer and was able to support himself through his earnings. Research the output of other well-known composers and their earnings in order to analyze the most lucrative composer careers. How do these earnings compare to modern pop singers' and songwriters' earnings? MS/HS

When Gluck was alive, each European country would have minted its own money, and thus Gluck would have had to know what each different kind of currency was worth in each place that he lived and worked, compared to a base currency (known as an exchange rate.) Compare the value of the U.S. dollar to different currencies around the world. In which countries are the exchange rates favorable to the dollar? In which countries is the dollar worth less than that country's currency? Create a graphic organizer comparing currency values around the world. MS/HS

What is the role that mathematical ratios play in musical harmony? What is the mathematical difference between a just-toned scale and an equal-tempered scale? What are the harmony effects of using each method for tuning a piano? For tuning a clavichord? HS

Science, Environment, Ecology, Technology and Engineering

State Standards: Earth and Space Science, Life Science, Physical Science, Environmental Literacy and Sustainability, Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science

In *Orpheus & Eurydice*, the three-headed dog named Cerberus likes Orpheus's music. How does music affect animals? How do loud sounds affect animals? PreK

Eurydice dies of a snake bite. What are snakes? What do they look like? How do they move? Pretend to move like a snake; what does that movement feel like to you? Do all snakes have teeth? Why are people sometimes afraid of snakes? Are all snakes dangerous? How can you tell if a snake is dangerous or not? PreK

When Orpheus descends to the Underworld, he has to be protected from monsters, ghosts, the Furies, and Hades. Are any of these entities real? Why or why not? PreK

A piano makes a sound when a hammer hits a string inside, and a harp makes a sound when the string is plucked. Stretch a rubber band tightly across a box. How does the rubber band sound when it's hit with a pencil? How does it sound when it's plucked? PreK

Amore brings Eurydice back to life through his powers as a god. Is there a way to bring someone back to life nowadays? Is there an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) in your school? Where is the AED located? Is it near the fire extinguisher? Who should use those machines? PreK/ES

Another famous Greek myth is that of the Trojan Horse, which was an object built to hide soldiers and weapons inside something that seemed harmless. What are some modern versions of a Trojan horse? What objects could hide something bad inside? Can computers have "hidden" dangers? PreK/ES

Gluck copied his music by hand, so he probably wanted to save time and money by not using too much paper. How can we save paper today? ES

Gluck played the *armonica*, a glass instrument invented by Benjamin Franklin in 1761, that makes sound when a player rubs wet fingers on the graduated-size bowls. Simulate playing an *armonica*. Carefully line up some glasses filled with different levels of water. Rub your wet finger around the rim of the glasses and listen to the sounds. How are the sounds different when there are different amounts of water?

ES

In Virgil's version of the *Orpheus* legend, Aristaeus, the keeper of flying insects, sees Eurydice dancing in the woods, becomes enthralled by her beauty and chases her, leading to her fatal encounter with the snake. Insects are the most diverse group of animals on Earth and they represent more than half of all animal species. Imagine that each character in *Orpheus & Eurydice* is an insect. Which would most closely match their operatic roles, and why?

ES/MS

Eurydice dies of a snake bite. Snakes belong to the suborder Serpentes; in biological classification, a "suborder" is a category that ranks below an order and above a family. As ectothermic (cold-blooded) vertebrates covered in overlapping scales, they inhabit nearly every ecosystem on earth. They regulate their body temperature externally and periodically shed their skins to grow. What are other biological classifications? What are some of the defining characteristics of those classifications?

ES/MS

The composer of *Orpheus & Eurydice*, Christoph Gluck, traveled frequently for his work. Since he lived a long time before cell phones and computers, how would he have kept in touch with his wife when he was away from home? Pretend you are Gluck and you have some exciting news to share with your family; how will you communicate your news? How long do you think it will take for them to get your message?

ES/MS

Beginning in 1737, Gluck traveled extensively throughout Europe for his work. What kinds of transportation were available for long distance travel in the mid to late 1700s? Select one of Gluck's journeys, from the city of Vienna to Paris, Milan, Prague, or London, and plan a travel itinerary for Gluck. How long would it take him to arrive at his destination? How would he get there? Would he need to find places to stay overnight during the trip?

ES/MS

In one telling of the *Orpheus* myth, the Muses cast Orpheus's lyre into the sky as a constellation. Explore Lyra, the Celestial Harp, a small but prominent constellation. How is Lyra found? What does it look like? What stars comprise this constellation? When can Lyra be seen best in the Northern Hemisphere?

ES/MS

Invented by Benjamin Franklin, the glass *armonica* (also called a glass harmonica) was a wildly popular instrument in Gluck's time. What did it sound like? What scientific principles are involved in how and why it produces sound? What were the significant developments of Franklin's design for this instrument? Do any 18th or 19th-century *armonic*s still exist?

MS

Opera singers do not use microphones when performing. How are they able to make their voices carry over a full orchestra to a large audience? What is special about how they sing (how they produce sound) that allows for this feat? What would happen to the sound if a microphone were used to project their voice, and why would that occur?

MS

In 1787, the year Gluck died, the ill-fated *HMS Bounty* set sail for Tahiti on a botanical mission to acquire breadfruit plants to be introduced to the West Indies as a source of food for slaves. What other non-native plants have been introduced to North America for commercial reasons? What is the impact—positive and negative—of introducing non-native species?

MS

In one telling of the *Orpheus* myth, Orpheus is killed by Zeus so he won't reveal the secrets of the Underworld to mortals. However, the Muses decide to save Orpheus's head and keep it among the living people to sing forever, enchanting everyone with his melodies. How can bodies or body parts be preserved nowadays? How long do preserved remains last? Why would someone want to preserve bodies or parts of bodies, human or otherwise?

MS/HS

Orpheus managed to distract Cerberus, the three-headed dog who guards the Underworld, with his beautiful music. Can mammals be born with three heads, or extra body parts? What causes this unusual condition during an embryo's gestation? Is there a limit to the number of extra body parts an animal or people can have and still live? Why or why not?

MS/HS

Before his music could be printed, Gluck's musical compositions would have been written by hand. What kind of paper and ink would have been available in the mid-1700s, when Gluck was composing? What are the elements needed to make ink and paper? How are each made? What is the difference between ink used for handwriting and ink used at a print shop? How would ink and paper production have impacted the environment?

MS/HS

Teatro alla Scala in Milan is renowned in the opera world for its wonderful acoustics. What is meant by the term "acoustics"? How are places like theaters designed to have good acoustics? What elements do they have to consider? How do these elements impact the production and transmission of sound? What other buildings worldwide are famous for their "good" acoustics?

HS

In Gluck's time, theater stages would have been lit by oil lamps or candles. How much light does a candle emit? How much heat? Describing a light-source's brightness is called luminescence. What units are used to describe luminescence? How are stages lit today? How many candles would have been needed in Gluck's time to match the output of current theater lighting? Some theaters have also adopted LED lighting. What is meant by the term LED? How does an LED device produce light, as compared to a candle or an incandescent bulb? What is the advantage of using LED for stage lighting over traditional incandescent bulbs? What other environmental impacts—both intended and unintended—has the increased use of LED lighting had?

HS

HS

Greek letters are used in mathematics, science, engineering, as well as in areas where mathematical notation is used as symbols for constants, special functions, and also conventionally for variables representing certain quantities. In these contexts, the capital letters and the small letters represent distinct and unrelated entities. Research which concepts are represented by these Greek letters:

Aα	(alpha)
Bβ	(beta)
Γγ	(gamma)
Δδ	(delta)
Eε	(epsilon)
FϜ	(digamma)
Zζ	(zeta)
Hη	(eta)
Θθ	(theta)
Iι	(iota)
Kκ	(kappa)
Λλ	(lambda)
Mμ	(mu)
Nν	(nu)
Ξξ	(xi)
Oο	(omicron)
Ππ	(pi)
Pρ	(rho)
Σσς	(sigma)
Ττ	(tau)
Υυ	(upsilon)
Φφ	(phi)
Χχ	(chi)
Ψψ	(psi)
Ωω	(omega)

World Languages

ACTFL Standards: 1 Communication, 2 Cultures, 3 Connections, 4 Comparison, 5 Communities
(National Standards from American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages)

The Greek alphabet has 24 letters. Here are the uppercase and lowercase letters, along with their common phonetic values:

PreK

Α α	Alpha (a as in "father")
Β β	Beta (v in modern Greek; b in ancient)
Γ γ	Gamma (g as in "good" or a soft throaty sound)
Δ δ	Delta (d as in "dog")
Ε ε	Epsilon (e as in "met")
Ζ ζ	Zeta (z as in "zebra")
Η η	Eta (ee as in "see")
Θ θ	Theta (th as in "thick")
Ι ι	Iota (ee as in "see" or i as in "sit")
Κ κ	Kappa (k as in "kite")
Λ λ	Lambda (l as in "lamp")
Μ μ	Mu (m as in "moon")
Ν ν	Nu (n as in "noon")
Ξ ξ	Xi (ks as in "socks")
Ο ο	Omicron (o as in "lot")
Π π	Pi (p as in "pen")
Ρ ρ	Rho (r as in "run")
Σ σ / ς	Sigma (s as in "sun")
Τ τ	Tau (t as in "top")
Υ υ	Upsilon (oo as in "boot" or the French u)
Φ φ	Phi (ph or f as in "phone")
Χ χ	Chi (ch as in the Scottish "loch")
Ψ ψ	Psi (ps as in "caps")
Ω ω	Omega (o as in "vote")

Look at the Greek alphabet above. Are there any letters that look the same as in the English alphabet? Do the Greek letters make the same sounds as in the English alphabet? Using the Greek letters, try to spell your first name so that when read aloud it sounds like your name. How does the Greek version compare to the English version of your name?

Pretend you're taking a trip back in time to ancient Greece. Learn some Greek words and phrases with your classmates. Practice saying them to each other, with the help of your teacher:

PreK/ES

Hello	Γεια σου (YAH soo)
My name is ...	Με λένε... (me LEH-neh)
Goodbye	Γειά σου (YAH soo)
Good morning	Καλημέρα (ka-lee MER-ah)
Goodnight	Καληνύχτα (ka-lee NEEK-tah)
Thank you	Ευχαριστώ (eff-kha-ri-STOH)
Please/you're welcome	Παρακαλώ (para-kah-LOH)
Yes	Ναι (neh)
No	Όχι (OH-hee)

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/travel-tips/basic-greek-words-and-phrases-travel>

The original Gluck opera based on the Orpheus legend was written in Italian: *Orfeo ed Euridice*. It was later changed to French: *Orphée et Eurydice*. Have you ever watched a movie in another language with subtitles translated into English? How do we know what opera singers are singing about when they sing in another language? What are supertitles? ES

The composer Gluck spoke several languages. What language or languages do you hear spoken at home or in your neighborhood? Do you know any words from a language other than English? Brainstorm words that you and your classmates might know from other languages. ES

Gluck's name was spelled several different ways. Find some variations in names of people you know, such as Smith and Smyth, Anderson and Andersen, Taylor and Tailor. Why do you think there are different spellings for names that sound the same? ES

Though written in French, there are many words in *Orphée et Eurydice* that might look and sound familiar to you because they are cognates for words in English. Essentially, a cognate is a word in one language that is similar in spelling and meaning to a word in another language. Look at some of the arias in the *Orphée et Eurydice* libretto. What words can you find that are cognates for words you know in English? Some words may be perfect cognates, and some may be near-perfect cognates; what is the difference between these two types? Also, beware false cognates—investigate what makes a cognate a “false friend”? Can you find any examples of false cognates in the arias, too? ES/MS

What is an *idée fixe*? Find synonyms and translations for the term. What nuances are there in other languages? ES/MS

Orpheus & Eurydice is an opera based on the myth of Orpheus and set to a libretto by Ranieri de' Calzabigi. The opera belongs to the genre of the *azione teatrale*, an Italian term meaning an opera on a mythological subject with choruses and dancing. Translate the term for the genre into other languages, including English. ES/MS

How do people learn a new language? Czech was Gluck's native language. How might he have learned to speak German, French, and Italian? Brainstorm tools we use now to learn a new language. ES/MS

When she dies, Eurydice travels to the ancient Greek Underworld and is sent to the Elysian Fields. As a traveler in a new place, she might need to know how to speak politely to the spirits that already reside in the Underworld. Visit this website to learn some basic Greek words and phrases: <https://www.travelandleisure.com/travel-tips/basic-greek-words-and-phrases-travel> ES/MS

With a partner, write and perform a short dialogue in Greek that Eurydice might have with another spirit in the Underworld, using some of the phrases you learn from this website.

The Pittsburgh Opera production of *Orpheus & Eurydice* will be sung in French with English supertitles projected above the stage. How can patrons keep the variations of the title straight? MS

Original Italian name: *Orfeo ed Euridice* 1762

Revised French name: *Orphée et Eurydice* 1859

English name: *Orpheus and Eurydice*

Why do you think the Pittsburgh Opera production is using a modernized English title for this opera? If the opera is the French version, why not use the revised French title?

The role of Orpheus in the opera revisions changed from alto castrato (Vienna premiere), to soprano castrato (Parma premiere), to *haute-contre* (high tenor, French premiere). Explain the voice terms and their etymology. MS/HS

Though *Orpheus & Eurydice* was originally written in Italian, it has also been translated into French. What are the challenges a librettist and composer face when translating an opera from one language to another? Consider how different words may have different syllables as well as different connotations? Try translating an aria from *Orpheus & Eurydice* into a language that Gluck did not speak, such as Spanish or Mandarin. How well does your translation fit the music? What did you need to change so that your translation “works”? MS/HS

Gluck’s colleague and fellow composer Antonio Salieri wrote in his memoirs that Gluck, whose native language was Czech, had a tendency to mix his secondary languages of German, Italian, and French together when speaking. Sometimes this mixing is called a “bridge” language. What are some examples of bridge languages spoken in the United States? Look up these linguistic terms: code switching, dialect, pidgin, and creole. Which terms best fit what Gluck may have been doing? HS

Compare the Italian, French, and English libretti for *Orpheus & Eurydice*. What observations can be made about how opera translations need to match the musical rhythm from one language to another? HS

Character Themes for *Orpheus & Eurydice*

Eleanore N. Childs, a Pittsburgh attorney and child advocate, worked with teachers for more than a decade to research character education and develop the Heartwood Ethics Curriculum for Children. Heartwood's *life lessons through literature* promote understanding and practice of seven universal character attributes, which constitute the foundation of community among all people.

The Heartwood Institute defined seven universal character attributes:

- **Courage** is not only mastering fear; it is the ability to face difficulty or risk with integrity and honor.
- **Loyalty** is being faithful to a person, group, or ideal based on understanding that we are all part of something greater than ourselves.
- **Justice** is being guided by a balance of truth, reason, and fairness to all.
- **Respect** is regard for all life on earth. It calls us to value all people and their contributions, viewpoints, and differences, such as culture, religion, age, race, and ability.
- **Hope** guides our future through faith and aspiration, helping us to rise above selfishness and despair.
- **Honesty** is being truthful and honorable, the foundation for friendship and community.
- **Love** is deep care and concern for others, encompassing all the attributes. The more love we give, the richer we become.

Discuss two attributes—**Honesty** and **Love**—after reading the synopsis of *Orpheus & Eurydice*.

1. Trust is an outgrowth of honesty, as the ability to trust stems from the belief that someone will be truthful and not break faith with another person. Based on her remonstrances to Orpheus, does Eurydice *trust* him? What does he do that gives her cause to doubt his honor and love? What does this tell us about both characters, and perhaps their marriage?

2. In some versions of this myth, Orpheus is not considered an honorable man because he does not commit suicide once Eurydice has been lost a second time, and therefore his love cannot be true since he is unwilling to join her forever in the Underworld. Do you think Orpheus is essentially an honest man? Why or why not?

3. In his effort to rescue Eurydice from the Underworld, is Orpheus attempting to “cheat” death? Is that what an honest person would do—cheat? Should his love for Eurydice override honorable behavior, or does his love reflect a different aspect of honor? Eurydice is in Elysium, a kind of heavenly afterlife; is Orpheus’s attempt to bring her back to the world an honest act of love, or is he acting more in his own self-interest, since he cannot imagine life without her?

4. Amore sets the conditions for Orpheus to rescue Eurydice, and it is these conditions that Orpheus feels forced to violate to assure Eurydice of his love. Since Amore is the god of love, why does the god put conditions on Orpheus’s journey? Is he testing Orpheus’s love? If so, why?