

Opera Stories | *Carmen* - Teacher Notes and Script

Suggested activities

Read the story

To practice their reading out loud, children could read (perform) the script with or instead of the narrator.

Quiz

Children could be asked the below questions and improve comprehension by going back over the script to answer them.

- Where is the story of *Carmen* set?
A. *Seville, Spain.*
- What is the name of the soldier that *Carmen* falls in love with?
A: *Don Jose*
- What does *Carmen* get arrested for?
A: *For fighting (another woman)*
- How does *Carmen* convince Don Jose to help her escape?
A: *She sings a beautiful song*
- Why does Don Jose kill *Carmen*?
A: *Because she has fallen in love with someone else**

*N.B. *Carmen* is portrayed as a flirtatious woman who manipulates men, which was an interesting challenge of gender roles and norms of the time (1870s). An alternative retelling in modern interpretations of *Carmen* is that she is a strong independent woman who is simply pursuing her own desires, whilst the male characters respond with violence and even murder.

Considering the positives and negatives of the characters is one of the reasons (along with the brilliant music) why *Carmen* remains so popular to this day. Asking the children's opinions of the characters actions might help them see the characters and what they represent in a new light.

Section	Script
1. Introduction 1:06 – 1:40	It's a hot day in Seville, and a group of soldiers are resting in the shade, while a group of women are sunbathing in the Spanish heat. A beautiful gypsy woman, <i>Carmen</i> , is laughing and flirting with the soldiers. She notices Don Jose and is excited by the challenge of making him fall in love with her. She sings a song to make him notice her.
2. <i>Habanera</i> Aria 1:40 – 2:15	<i>Love is a wild bird that nobody can tame and you call him quite in vain</i>

	<p><i>if it suits him not to come.</i></p> <p><i>Nothing helps, neither threat nor prayer. One man talks well, the other's silent; it's the other one that I prefer. He's silent but I like his looks.</i></p>
<p>3. Carmen Arrested 2:15 – 2:43</p>	<p>Later, Carmen gets into a fight with another woman and gets arrested.</p> <p>Imprisoned by Don Jose, the soldier she sang to earlier, Carmen is determined to charm him even more and persuade him to let her escape.</p> <p>She dances and sings for Don Jose, whispering sweet words into his ears.</p>
<p>4. <i>Pres de ramparts de Seville</i> Aria 2:43 – 3:09</p>	<p><i>Near the walls of Seville With my good friend Lilas Pastia I'll soon dance the happy Seguidilla And I'll drink Manzanilla Tralala...</i></p>
<p>5. Carmen Escapes 3:10 – 3:36</p>	<p>Blinded by love, Don Jose loosens the ropes around Carmen's hands, and she runs away.</p> <p>Don Jose is punished for letting her escape and his only dream is now to be with Carmen.</p> <p>But Carmen no longer loves Jose, she falls in love with someone else, leaving Jose, and breaking his heart.</p>
<p>6. Carmen Dies 3:36 – End</p>	<p>Humiliated by Carmen's rejection. He begs and threatens her, but she is stubborn and says she would rather die than to be with someone she does not love.</p> <p>Don Jose is overcome by emotion, and in a jealous rage, he kills Carmen.</p>