EARTH TO KENZIE
TEACHER’S GUIDE

Music by Frances Pollock
Libretto by Jessica Murphy Moo

Earth to Kenzie was Co-commissioned by Seattle Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago

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This Teacher’s Guide was originally created and compiled by and for Seattle Opera and then modified for use by Virginia Opera.
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WHAT IS AN OPERA?

Opera is simply storytelling, using words and music.

An opera is a partnership of words and music with the purpose of telling a dramatic story. While the story may be about everyday situations or historical figures, it usually has a moral or idea that the entire audience understands. Operas can be serious or funny, but most importantly, it unites a variety of people of diverse backgrounds by sharing a common experience through music.

The words of an opera are called a libretto (the Italian word for “little book”), much like the words of a play are called a script. A librettist is the person who turns a story or idea into a libretto by writing dialogue and lyrics. The score is the combination of music and words of an opera. A composer (the person who writes the music) can use music as a tool to define the personality traits of his characters and to tell the feeling of the story.

One way in which a composer can use music is through the voices of the singers themselves. First, they consider the personality of a character, and then choose a voice type (either high or low) that best suits this type of person. The five most common voice types, arranged from highest to lowest, are soprano, mezzo-soprano (also called alto), tenor, baritone, and bass.

After a composer has chosen the characters’ voice types, the composer then interprets the libretto through music.

In an opera production, the ideas of the composer and librettist are expressed by the singers as directed by a conductor and stage director. The conductor is responsible for the musical aspects of the performance, leading the orchestra and the singers. The stage director is responsible for the dramatic movement and the storytelling on the stage. The stage director works with a design team—a scenic designer, costume designer, and a lighting designer—to determine the visual interpretation of the work. (In the case of this Virginia Opera production of Earth to Kenzie, there was also a videographer!) Just as the composer and librettist must work in close communication in the writing of an opera, the conductor and stage director must have a close collaboration with the singers and the design team (and choreographer, if dancing is involved).

The Story of *Earth to Kenzie*

Kenzie and her mother are forced to move out of their home before Christmas, and they have no place to go. Kenzie feels scared about her uncertain future and has trouble breathing due to asthma. To distract herself, Kenzie plays video games. She wants to be just like her video game avatar, Edwin, who can escape bad situations, control his destiny, and breathe in any atmosphere.

Kenzie and her mom find a temporary home in a family shelter, but Kenzie worries about going back to school. She has a homework assignment to write an essay on what she did over the break, but Kenzie doesn't want anyone to know that she and her mom spent Christmas living in their car.

At school, the teacher asks for the essay and tries to introduce Kenzie to Eddie, a new student in the class. Upset, Kenzie runs from the classroom.

After school, a taxi picks Kenzie up to return her to the shelter. She gets in and falls asleep, entering a dream world. In Kenzie's dream, Edwin jumps into the taxi, too, and the taxi transforms into a spaceship. As they fly higher and higher, they land on planet Catulon, where the cold temperature makes Kenzie's asthma act up. Panicked and scared, Kenzie realizes that her mom could help her, and that home may not always be a place, but it exists whenever she is with her mom.

When she arrives at the shelter, Kenzie's mom wakes her from the dream and they head inside. Kenzie is surprised to see her classmate Eddie, who also lives at the shelter. Kenzie and Eddie team up to do their homework together. The opera ends with Kenzie and Eddie sharing their essay with the class.
Meet the *Earth to Kenzie*

**Cast and Creative Team**

Catherine Goode  
Role: Kenzie  
Voice-type: Soprano  
Recent Highlights: Young Artist, Merola Opera Program; Lucia, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Opera in the Heights; Susanna, *Le nozze di Figaro*, Opera in the Heights  

Lauren Cook  
Role: Edwin the Avatar/Eddie  
Voice-type: Mezzo-soprano  
Upcoming: Cherubino, *Le nozze di Figaro*, Virginia Opera

Whitney Robinson  
Role: Mother  
Voice-type: Mezzo-soprano  
Last Virginia Opera Appearance: 2020  
Eric J. McConnell
Role: Space Kitty/Teacher/Taxi Driver
Voice-type: Bass-baritone
Recent Highlights: Donner, Das Rheingold, Virginia Opera; Bartolo, Il barbiere di Siviglia, Opera Steamboat; Ceprano, Rigoletto, Central City Opera; Sam, Trouble in Tahiti, Virginia Opera
Upcoming: Bartolo, Le nozze di Figaro, Virginia Opera

Kyle Lang
Role: Director
Recent Highlights: Director/Choreographer, La Cenerentola, Virginia Opera; Choreographer, My Fair Lady, Teatro Massimo di Palermo; Director/Choreographer, Die Zauberflöte, Dallas Opera
Upcoming: Director/Choreographer, Becoming Santa Claus, Chicago Opera Theater; Director/Choreographer, Le Nozze di Figaro, Virginia Opera; Director/Choreographer, The Pirates of Penzance, Utah Opera

Brandon Eldredge
Role: Music Director & Accompanist
Recent Highlights: Conductor, Dido and Aeneas, Central City Opera; Associate Conductor, Rigoletto, Central City Opera; Conductor, Mozart and Salieri, Opera Saratoga
Upcoming: Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master, La Bohème, Three Decembers, Le nozze di Figaro, Virginia Opera

Court Watson
Role: Scenic & Costume Designer
Recent Highlights: Set Design, Guys and Dolls, Ford's Theatre; Set Design, Hannah Senesh, National Yiddish Folksbiene, Off-Broadway; Costume Design, Rigoletto, Wolf Trap Opera
Upcoming: Set/Costume Design, Three Decembers, Virginia Opera; Set Design, Four Seasons, Richmond Ballet
MEET THE COMPOSER AND LIBRETTIST

FRANCES POLLOCK, COMPOSER

Frances Pollock is a composer who is excited by all kinds of music. She’s currently a student herself at Yale University where she studies composition with Christopher Theofanidis. Frances’ favorite music inspirations are Missy Elliot, Dolly Parton, Whitney Houston, Joni Mitchell, Stephen Sondheim, Beyoncé, and Billy Joel. She loves theater and spends most of her days writing music with theater and opera companies all over the country.

She has written operas for Washington National Opera in Washington, D.C., the PROTOTYPE Festival in New York City, and American Opera Projects in New York City. This coming year she will write music for Opera Omaha, Yale University, the Chautauqua Summer Festival, the Detroit New Music Ensemble and Bel Cantanti Opera in Silver Springs, Maryland.

When Frances is not writing music, she is singing in choirs, cooking dinner for friends and family, exploring New Haven, running with her wife and best friend, Emily, and cheering on her favorite minor league baseball team, the Hartford Yard Goats.

JESSICA MURPHY MOO, LIBRETTIST

Jessica Murphy Moo is an editor, writer, and writing teacher. She writes fiction, nonfiction, and she has written the words to two operas, which means she gets to call herself a librettist. (Fun fact: “libretto” is an Italian word that means “little book,” which audiences used to read to follow along with operas.)

Jessica is a big believer in revision and persistence. The first draft is never the final draft, but you get the words down and you go from there. She gets a lot of rejections on writing submissions, but she keeps going and every so often someone accepts something.

She worked at Seattle Opera for a long time as the company’s communications editor, and that’s where she wrote a lot and learned that this art form is so much fun for all ages. Her kiddos love it. One stood up during a dress rehearsal of Barber of Seville and started flinging her arms about and conducted the overture from the second balcony. Another got the chance to be a child actor in Porgy and Bess. How cool is that? Jessica is the editor of University of Portland’s alumni magazine and still writing up a storm.
Characters and Important Words

Kenzie, a fifth-grader with asthma and homework who loves to escape into the world of video games.

Kenzie’s Mother, the person Kenzie depends on the most. She is doing the best she can for her daughter despite difficult circumstances.

Edwin, Kenzie’s avatar in her video game.

Teacher, Kenzie and Eddie's classroom teacher.

Taxi Driver, the person who picks up Kenzie from school. (In some cities, laws require transportation to be provided to and from school for children living in shelters)

Eddie, a new student in Kenzie’s class who also lives in the family shelter.

Space-Kitties, cats from space who inhabit the planet Catulon (and Edwin's greatest fear).

- Real Estate Developer: a person or company that makes money by buying land and building new houses, condominiums, apartments, stores or offices on it.
- Eviction: the legal process used by a landlord to make a tenant move out.
- Homeless: Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
- Family Shelter: a building set up to provide safe shelter, beds, food, sanitation and other forms of support for women, children and families on their journey out of homelessness.
- Asthma: a respiratory condition marked by spasms in the bronchi of the lungs causing difficulty in breathing. It usually results from an allergic reaction, other forms of hypersensitivity or trauma.
- Avatar: in a video game, the graphical representation of the user or the user’s alter ego or character.
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<th><strong>VOCABULARY</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ACCOMPANIMENT</strong></td>
<td>The musical background provided for a principal part.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ARIA</strong></td>
<td>A musical piece or song for solo voice in opera.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CHORUS</strong></td>
<td>A large organized group of singers, especially one that performs with an orchestra or opera company.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COMPOSER</strong></td>
<td>The person who writes the music.</td>
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<td><strong>CONDUCTOR</strong></td>
<td>The person who leads the singers and orchestra.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COSTUMES</strong></td>
<td>The clothes the performers wear to help tell the story.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DUET</strong></td>
<td>A musical piece for two performers.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ENSEMBLE</strong></td>
<td>Two or more singers singing at the same time.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FINALE</strong></td>
<td>The last musical number of an act or show. It usually involves most of the cast and often repeats musical themes from the show.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LIBRETTIST</strong></td>
<td>The person who writes the words of an opera.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LIBRETTO</strong></td>
<td>The Italian word for “little book,” this is the text or words of an opera.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OPERA</strong></td>
<td>Storytelling using words and music.</td>
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<td><strong>PROPS</strong></td>
<td>Objects placed on the stage and used by the actors; an abbreviation of the word “properties.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RECITATIVE</strong></td>
<td>A style of singing that is similar to speech, which is often used to develop the plot.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SCORE</strong></td>
<td>The book that contains all of the vocal and instrumental music of an opera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SET</strong></td>
<td>The scenery used on the stage to show location.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STAGE DIRECTOR</strong></td>
<td>The person who decides how the singers will move on stage and how they will act while they are singing their parts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VOICE TYPE</strong></td>
<td>The classification of a singer’s voice, primarily based on the singer’s vocal range. The five most common voice types, arranged from highest to lowest, are: soprano, mezzo-soprano (also called alto), tenor, baritone, and bass.</td>
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Understanding Homelessness

The term “homeless children and youth”:

(A) Means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and
(B) Includes:

(i) Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;

(ii) Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;

(iii) Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) Migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described above.

The term “unaccompanied youth” includes a homeless child or youth in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. [from US legal code 42 U.S.C. § 11434a]


Why Study Homelessness?

Studying homelessness:

• Helps children to make sense of the economic injustices in the world and form thoughtful opinions for themselves.
• Provides an opportunity for schools to interact with their community and establish service-learning partnerships.
• Gives students the chance to make a contribution toward ending homelessness.
• Identifies stereotypes and dispels myths about people without homes.
• Reinforces the value of education in fulfilling one’s own career goals.
• Sensitizes students to be more accepting of those in their school who might be without a home.
• Prepare students to deal with important social problems instead of “sheltering” them from the concerns of our society.

Strategies for Teachers

• Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness.

• Make the classroom a welcoming place for homeless students using tools such as a lunch buddy.
  o Inform the student of extracurricular activities that may be of interest, and arrange participation.
  o Do not hold homeless students accountable for situations over which they have no control, such as not having a place to do homework or not being able to pay fines.
  o Do not disclose the student's living situation.

• Encourage the student, and hold them to high expectations.

• Discuss school-related challenges with the homeless student and connect the student with services or make appropriate accommodations.
  o Adjust assignments so students not living in permanent settings can complete them. (A student living in a hotel room or who has limited supplies may not be able to carry out science activities or bring in newspaper articles or information from the internet.)
  o Provide a time and place before, during, or after school for a student to complete assignments.
  o Arrange tutoring, supplemental instruction, or counseling expeditiously because many homeless students will be in your school for only a short period of time.

• Assist other students in understanding family homelessness and treating their peers with kindness and respect.

• Look for any signs that other students are teasing or bullying a student who may be experiencing homelessness, and intervene or report the students to the principal.

• Assess students frequently so that you can determine progress even if the student is in your class only a short time.

• Communicate with a student's parents or guardians about their concerns or ways to help their child or youth be more successful in school.
  o Contact the parent or guardian if the student is absent or exhibits concerning behaviors.
  o Personal contact (in person or by phone) is often more effective than sending a letter or email.

• Do not take away students' possessions; homeless students may need the security of having their belongings nearby.

• Create a welcoming climate and build trust with all students.

• Be sensitive and understanding.

• Ensure that school and classroom policies and procedures, such as disciplinary policies, are fair to homeless students and do not negativity affect them because of their homelessness.

• Learn more about the McKinney-Vento Act and connect with your local liaison.

• Connect homeless students and families to services and housing assistance in your community, including through non-profit and faith-based organizations.

Homelessness Resources

EDUCATION

• National Center for Homeless Education: https://nche.ed.gov/

• Project HOPE – Project Hope-Virginia is Virginia’s Program for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. William & Mary administers the program for the Virginia Department of Education. Funding is authorized under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (P.L. 114-95). https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/

• The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) is a national membership association dedicated to educational excellence for children and youth experiencing homelessness. NAEHCY advocates for change through state and federal policy; provides publications and resources; and sponsors an annual conference specifically for educators, service providers, policy makers, and researchers who work in the field of educating homeless children and youth. https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/

Statewide Resources

• Crisis Assistance Directory – Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
• Virginia Homeless Solutions Program – part of VA DHCD
• Homeless Information: Virginia – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Northern Virginia

FACETS: FACETS opens doors by helping parents, their children, and individuals who suffer the effects of poverty in Fairfax County.

SECOND STORY: Second Story transforms the lives of children, youth and their families by providing safe havens and opportunities for them to grow and thrive. Our programs provide support at critical turning points in their lives.

Richmond

HOUSING FAMILIES FIRST: Housing Families First gives families facing homelessness the opportunity to build a legacy for their families by providing a path to a permanent home

CHANGE THE WORLD RVA: Change the World RVA is a 501(c)3 established to support high school and college students in Richmond, Virginia who are experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Change the World RVA is an all-volunteer organization.

Hampton Roads

STANDUP FOR KIDS: Ending the cycle of youth homelessness. We do this in cities across America, one youth at a time.

FORKIDS: Breaking the cycle of homelessness and poverty for families & children.
Kenzie’s Mind Map

After reading the Synopsis (pg. 4) and Understanding Homelessness (pgs. 10–11), have your students create a mind map exploring the topic of homelessness while you facilitate the activity, reinforcing the idea that the product is individual, original and personal. After the activity, consider holding a class discussion to make connections between homelessness, the opera, and other texts/media.

Demonstrate a Mind Map with the following instructions, then have your students follow the same instructions to create theirs.

1. Find the center of the page. This is where your MAIN IDEA lives. The main idea is the starting point of your Mind Map and represents the topic you are going to explore. Your main idea should be in the center of your page and can include an image or color that fits with your Mind Map's topic. Taking the time to personalize your main idea, whether it's hand-drawn or using software, will strengthen the connection you have with the content in your Mind Map.

2. Add BRANCHES to your map. Your branches will stem from the main idea. The main branches are the key themes. These branches will contain notes, facts and information related to the main idea. These branches will also have secondary and tertiary branches that contain further information that builds upon the prior branch. They all contain associations and relationships.

3. Add KEYWORDS. Each branch should represent a concept that relates to your central idea. On each branch, use a keyword rather than a sentence. It's easier to look at.

4. Color-code your branches. COLORS also make images more appealing and engaging compared to plain, monochromatic images.

5. Include images, drawings, abstract art, visual signifiers (e.g., emoji)
Hypothermia (hi-poe-THUR-me-uh) occurs when your body loses heat faster than it produces it. The most common causes of hypothermia are exposure to cold-weather conditions or cold water. But prolonged exposure to any environment colder than your body can lead to hypothermia if you aren't dressed appropriately or can't control the conditions. For example, since it's so cold in space, Kenzie and Edwin may have risked hypothermia by traveling to planet Catulon.

WHAT TOOLS DO KENZIE AND EDWIN NEED?

Below are items anyone might take on a journey that might turn frigidly cold. Circle the objects you think would be helpful. Next, write how you would use the objects you selected.
What Does It Mean To Be Homeless?

In the opera, Kenzie and her mother are evicted from their building and have to live in their car before finding a temporary home at a family shelter. At this point in their lives, they are homeless. This doesn't mean that they will always be homeless, though.

Homelessness is something that happens to people, but it is not who they are.

Imagine if you were in a similar situation. How would you feel?

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If Kenzie was your classmate, and you saw her having a hard time, what might you say to her?

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ACROSS

2 The person who picks up Kenzie from School
5 Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
6 The imaginary planet Kenzie and Edwin land on in Kenzie’s dream world
7 A building set up to provide safe shelter, beds, food, sanitation, and other forms of support for women, children, and families on their journey out of homelessness
9 Exists whenever Kenzie is with her mom
11 A new student in Kenzie’s class who also lives in the family shelter

DOWN

1 The person Kenzie depends on the most. She is trying to do the best she can for her daughter despite difficult circumstances.
3 A respiratory condition marked by spasms in the bronchi of the lungs causing difficulty in breathing.
4 A person or company that makes money by buying land and building new houses, condominiums, apartments, stores or offices on it.
8 An icon or figure representing a particular person in a video game.
10 Kenzie’s avatar in her video game.

WORD LIST
ASTHMA
AVATAR
EDDIE
EDWIN
FAMILY SHELTER
HOME
HOMELESS
KENZIE’S MOTHER
PLANET CATULON
REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER
TAXI DRIVER
Earth to Kenzie Word Search

H T G R S T M B H O U S I N G B Q C K C
A A S B E F H O A V E R G X G G K G A C
F S P R A H U Y Y Y E D V O R O U E R S
R T A F E D C L P S Q F W A P N T Y E P
I H C E C V I A O O X S T I S C H P P A
E M E Q V M I P E S T A K T N O W L O C
N A S Y A I M R E T V H A Z M F M A D E
D R H F A O C R D A U B E E X A S N J K
S E I O C G F T D I L V W R L O V E N I
H I P U M E T V I E X O F X M M E T O T
I D H P V E E Q H O R A V U N I T C I T
P D T N E R L O C K N Q T A T D A A T Y
L E H V S K U E D O O F X O K Q T T A G
V E W I T S V S S S D Y D Y V C S U N P
I Y T N I R L M L S H V I N N C E L I M
L Y Z N W M B O D P N E Y B K R L O G V
U P G E G A R U O C K E L J K A A N A P
F V T S I T T E R B I L S T C C E L M Y
V I D E O G A M E L U P Z S E A R P I O
R S T V G N E I Z N E K F G Q R Q P Y Q

WORD LIST

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVERSITY</th>
<th>FAMILY</th>
<th>KENZIE</th>
<th>SPACE-KITTY</th>
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<tr>
<td>ASTHMA</td>
<td>FOOD</td>
<td>LIBRETTIST</td>
<td>SPACESHIP</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVATAR</td>
<td>FRIENDSHIP</td>
<td>LOVE</td>
<td>TAXI DRIVER</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMPOSER</td>
<td>HOMELESSNESS</td>
<td>OPERA</td>
<td>TEACHER</td>
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<tr>
<td>COURAGE</td>
<td>HOMEWORK</td>
<td>PLANET - CATULON</td>
<td>UNSTABLE-HOUSING</td>
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<td>EDDIE</td>
<td>HOUSING</td>
<td>REAL - ESTATE</td>
<td>VIDEO GAME</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDWIN</td>
<td>HYPOTHERMIA</td>
<td>RENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>EVICTION</td>
<td>IMAGINATION</td>
<td>SHELTER</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Color By Note

- Eighth Notes = Orange
- Quarter Notes = Yellow
- Quarter Rests = Purple
- Half Notes = Blue
- Half Rests = Green
- Whole Notes = Black
- Whole Rests = Red
After the Performance

Encourage more personal responses by suggesting students write thank-you notes to the singers, draw pictures of what they saw, write reviews of the performance, etc. These can be sent to Virginia Opera:

Virginia Opera
Attn.: Earth to Kenzie
P.O. Box 2580
Norfolk, VA 23501

If opera is a completely new art form to your students, this first experience may have been quite different from what they expected. Discuss how their responses differ from or met their expectations.

If some students have previous experience with opera, talk about how they felt returning to the art form and how seeing opera for a second (or third) time compared with the first.

Discuss what differences they noticed, or think there might be, between a live opera performance and an opera film.

Encourage your students to take advantage of future opportunities to see opera live or on television and film.

Discussion Questions and Activities

Provide an open-ended forum for your students to discuss the questions below so they can collaborate and exchange ideas and improve their communication, creativity, and critical thinking.

- Can a car be a home?
- What are some different kinds of shelters? What makes something a shelter?
- Why do people need shelter?
- What are the most important things people need in life?
- What does it mean to be homeless?
- Have you seen people experiencing homelessness on in the park or on the streets?
- What do you need in order to feel safe?
- Can love be a kind of shelter?
- What would a perfect home look like to you?
Provide information and materials that will allow student to:

- List some major causes of homelessness.
- Separate some myths about people who are homeless from facts.
- Identify some challenges that people experiencing homelessness face in their daily lives.
- Understand some of the solutions to homelessness.
- Discuss what they have learned about homelessness with their families and friends.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Place to Stay: A Shelter Story</td>
<td>Gutiérrez, Erin</td>
<td>2019</td>
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<td>Aunt Pearl</td>
<td>Kuiting, Monica</td>
<td>2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miss Pinkeltink’s Purse</td>
<td>Brozo, Patty</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<td>Still A Family</td>
<td>Reeves Sturgis, Brenda</td>
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<td>Rich: A Dymonde Daniel Book</td>
<td>Grimes, Nikki</td>
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<td>Last Stop on Market Street</td>
<td>de la Peña, Matt</td>
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<td>The Magic Beads</td>
<td>Nielsen-Fernlund, Susin</td>
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<td>A Shelter in Our Car</td>
<td>Gunning, Monica</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>The Bridge Home</td>
<td>Venkatraman, Padma</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Great Jeff</td>
<td>Abbott, Tony</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Fixed Address</td>
<td>Nielsen-Fernlund, Susin</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Under the Clouds</td>
<td>Sarno, Melissa</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Exact Location of Home</td>
<td>Messner, Kate</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crenshaw</td>
<td>Applegate, Katherine</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold Fast</td>
<td>Balliett, Blue</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Steal A Dog</td>
<td>O’Connor, Barbara</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bud, Not Buddy</td>
<td>Curtis, Christopher Paul</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Our Street: Our First Talk About Poverty</td>
<td>Roberts, Jillian</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggested Activities: Language Arts

Read the synopsis (pg. 4) or a short book of your choice to the class from the reading list.

Conflict and Resolution
Stories generally have some conflict that needs to be resolved. Consider the conflicts in the opera or book with your students. How are they resolved? (K–6)

Identifying Character Types
Ask your students to identify the good guys, bad guys, and heroes in the book or opera. Then, go over the voice types outlined in the Vocabulary section and discuss which voice types are appropriate for those characters. Would Edwin, Kenzie's Avatar in her video game would be as comforting and encouraging if it was sung with a high voice instead of a low voice? Should Kenzie be a soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, or baritone? (K–6)

Character discussion
Which characters are fully developed? Which are not? Are there major events in the story that affect the character's growth? What are each of the characters' strengths and weaknesses? How do the characters differ from each other? (K–6)

Pair-Think-Share
Put your students in groups of three with their classmates and have them creatively complete the story pyramid together. Once all groups are done working, have each group present their pyramid to the class. (K–6)

STORY PYRAMID
1. The main character's name.
2. two words describing the main character
3. Three words describing the setting
4. Four words stating the problem
5. Five words describing one event
6. Six words describing another event
7. Seven words stating the solution to line 4

Book Review
Read reviews of books your class has read. Identify the important elements of a review, such as summary and response. Ask the class to choose a book from Children's Books on Homelessness (perhaps some are available at your local library) and write reviews on their book of choice. (K–6)

Being Brave
To find her home, Kenzie first has to face her fears and realize that she's not alone after all. Ask students to point out instances in the opera when Kenzie is brave. Then have them share situations where they themselves were brave and use those stories as the basis for personal narratives. (K–6)

Write a review for Earth to Kenzie. Reviews are very important to every opera company. They help the company know how the performance was enjoyed by the audience, and get other people excited about coming to see the show! Have your students write a review of Earth to Kenzie after thinking about what they liked and didn't like about the opera, including the story, set, and music. (2–6)
Letters for Change (2-6)

As a group, have your students choose a project they would like to undertake to fight homelessness. Help them identify people in their community they will need to ask for help and write letters to those community members, explaining the nature of their project and how that person can contribute.

Materials
- Flip chart or white board and markers
- Notebook paper
- Pencils
- Envelopes
- Stamps

Procedure:
1. Through the Social Studies suggested activity “Change makers,” identify a class project to address homelessness. Have the class identify who can help them with their project. Then, have them create a list of possible resources, such as other students, teachers, family members, community members, community organizations, and elected officials, and record how that person can help.
2. Divide students into groups based on whom they will write to. Have each group brainstorm or create a Mind Map on what they might say to convince their resource to help him/her make this change. How might have this resource helped Kenzie and her mother? What facts about homelessness in your city or town could students use to get the attention of their reader? Are there personal stories they could tell to make a point?
3. Have students share their lists with the class. Record the arguments they will use to persuade their audience on a flip chart or white board.
4. In a mini-lesson, model the conventions of letter writing for students. Explain elements such as date, receiver addresses, salutation, body, closing and signature.

Draft
- Remind students to think about who their reader is, what they want their audience to do, and why they want them to take this action.
- Encourage students to share with their audience what they have learned about homelessness as a way to convince them to take action. Students will refer to the brainstormed lists or Mind Map when deciding what to write.

Revise
- Ask pairs to trade letters and give each other feedback. Student will read each other’s work, pretending to have never heard of the project before. Students will evaluate themselves by asking: Does the letter clearly state what the project is, why the class has chosen the project, and how the “Change Maker” can help? If not, what do the author’s need to change in their revision?

Edit
- Teacher will review, with the class, the elements of a model letter. Ask students to check for these elements in each other’s letters as they proofread for spelling and grammar.

Publish
- Students will prepare final versions of their letters, addressing and stamping the envelopes themselves, and mail them.
Follow-up: have students write thank-you letters to community members who helped with the project.


Suggested Activities: Social Studies

Describe the set
Help your students recall the world of Earth to Kenzie. Ask what colors, shapes, and objects they remember from it. Then have your students make a sketch based on their memory. (K–6)

Create a My Map
Imagine that the setting of Earth to Kenzie is in your town, have your students create a map that includes a home, a car, a family shelter, a school, a classroom, video games, and other locations relevant to Kenzie's life. Have your students use Google My Maps to create their very own maps that include images, links to other websites that may be great resources to Kenzie and her Mom, and other customizable options they choose. (3–6)

Earth to Kenzie Digital Timeline
Have your students create a digital timeline of events in the opera. What places, events, or people do they learn about? (3–6)

Classroom Visitor
Invite someone to come talk to your class about the issues of homelessness and housing displacement. It would be preferable to have someone who has been homeless, a homeless advocate, or someone who works directly with people who are experiencing homelessness or housing displacement. Before the visitor comes to the class, prepare for the speaking by having students talk about appropriate and inappropriate questions to ask. After the visit, make sure that students follow up with thank you letters. (K–6)

Current Events
Over the course of several months or the whole year, track ways that the issue of homelessness is covered in the local paper. As a class, clip, read, and discuss these articles. (2–6)

Sequence and Order of Events
Look at the events below. Put the story sequence in correct order. (K–3)

- Kenzie arrives at the shelter. Her mom wakes her from the dream and they head inside. Kenzie is surprised to see her classmate Eddie, who also lives at the shelter. Kenzie and Eddie team up to do their homework together.
- Kenzie and Eddie share their essay with their class.
- Panicked and scared, Kenzie realizes that her mom could help her, and that home may not always be a place, but it exists whenever she is with her mom.
- At school, the teacher asks for the essay and tries to introduce Kenzie to Eddie, a new
student in the class. Upset, Kenzie runs from the classroom.

- Kenzie and her mother are forced to move out of their home before Christmas, and they have no place to go. Kenzie feels scared about her uncertain future and has trouble breathing due to asthma. To distract herself, Kenzie plays video games. She wants to be just like her video game avatar, Edwin, who can escape bad situations, control his destiny, and breathe in any atmosphere.
- After school, a taxi picks Kenzie up to return her to the shelter. She gets in and falls asleep, entering a dream world. In Kenzie's dream, Edwin jumps into the taxi, too, and the taxi transforms into a spaceship. As they fly higher and higher, they land on planet Catulon, where the cold temperature makes Kenzie's asthma act up.
- Kenzie and her mom find a temporary home in a family shelter, but Kenzie worries about going back to school. She has a homework assignment to write an essay on what she did over the break, but Kenzie doesn't want anyone to know that she and her mom spent Christmas living in their car.

Change makers (K–6)

*Through group research, students identify one problem facing homelessness and an action they can take to address it. The class plans and follows through on this project, enlisting the help of additional community members as needed.*

Materials:

- Speaker on homelessness
- Flip chart or Mind Map (pg. 13)
- Markers
- Books on homelessness (pg. 21)
- Computers with internet access (optional)

Procedure

1. Discuss with students what they have learned about homelessness. What challenges do Kenzie and her mother face? What available homelessness resources have you learned about that could make their lives easier? Brainstorm and create a list or Mind Map of resources Kenzie and her mother need, such as food, clothing, shelter, affordable housing, or understanding from other students and families. Record the list on a flip chart or add branches to your map.

2. Ask the class to pick one thematic issue they would like to change to help children experiencing homelessness like Kenzie. Is it a policy addressing issues such as housing or employment? Or is it access to shelter or food? Explain to the students the steps they will need to take in order to come up with a project centered on their thematic issue of choice.

3. In order to plan their project, the students will need to gather information. As a large group, identify the questions they need to answer. Then, break students into groups to research aspects of the problem they have identified. Using the websites and documents listed under Resources for information, have each group of students identify the answers to their questions.

4. Have each student group share their research findings. Ask them what they can do to address the issue they have learned about. Consider all research findings and then
select one project that the class can realistically take action on.

5. Help the students come up with an action plan to achieve a goal. Set a deadline for each step of the process. If appropriate, ask students to request help from other community members (see “Writing for Change” in the Language Arts section of this guide).


Resources:
National Geographic Mapmaker Interactive:
https://mapmaker.nationalgeographic.org/

Virginia’s Homeless Programs 2019-2020 Program Year Report
United States Interagency Council on Homelessness
Homeless Information: Virginia

Suggested Activities: Math

Count the cost
Teach students about money using word problems based on the opera, such as the cost of a cab ride. (K–6)

Opera company budgeting
Help your students brainstorm the costs of running an opera company and create an annual budget. Consider things like singers’ and musicians’ salaries, costumes, administrative staff, computers, rehearsal and performance space, etc. (K–6)

You’re the Artistic Administrator! (See Resource “What is an Opera?” pg. 3)
The principal singers in a Virginia Opera production might come from anywhere in the world. While they're here, they need a place to stay and transportation. Using the internet, have students find the cheapest, most convenient plane tickets, rental cars, and hotel reservations for their stay. After collecting all the information, determine how much money it takes to hire one singer. Now how about a cast of 4? (Think about this: a big opera like The Marriage of Figaro has 11 principal singers!) (K–6)

Additional online resources
www.philtulga.com
www.songsforteaching.com
http://artsende.kennedy-center.org/students
Public Opinion (K–6)

*Statistics provide important data for understanding the reasons people lose their homes in Virginia. Children need to learn how to interpret such information.*

Materials:

- Bar graph paper (see resources)
- Markers, crayons or colored pencils
- Computers with internet access (optional)

Procedure

1. Design a survey about homelessness and possible solutions to the problem. Help your students generate ideas and questions from state statistics; have children list questions they would ask upon seeing the material in graphic form.
2. Have students poll fellow classmates, family members, or other community members with questions such as:
   a. "Why do you think the homeless situation is what it is in Virginia?"
   b. "What can you do to help someone experiencing homelessness?"
   c. "What are some challenges that people experiencing homelessness face in their daily lives?"
3. Have students decide how to best categorize the information graphically and then create bar graphs (see Resources for graph).

Follow-up

What patterns do you see in the data? How does the data compare and contrast for different parts of the state? Why are there differences? What questions do the data raise, and how can they be answered?

Extensions:

- Present conclusions about your graphs to another class, or display students' work in a public space.
- Collect additional data to answer the questions raised in discussion.

You are a single mother with a 10-year-old daughter, Kenzie. You receive $1087.00 cash and a $268 food voucher each month. You were lucky enough to find an apartment for $650.00 including heat; it is in a run-down building but your apartment is clean and safe. You enjoy volunteering at your local housing shelter twice a week, transportation money permitting. For transportation, you rely on your 1994 Volvo 850 Wagon. You would like to have a newer car with better mileage, but you are unable to afford the investment.

Your food voucher is just enough to cover your groceries, and you pay your $650 rent every month out of necessity. This leaves you with $437 for the rest of your monthly expenses.

For each item that you think is important, write the listed cost in the right-hand column. Note that some items may need to be purchased multiple times in one month. When you finish, add up the total on both pages. If the total is more than $437, decide which items you can cut out to make the total less than or equal to $437.
**Projected Monthly Expenses**

Starting funds $437

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>COST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Savings for Emergencies:</strong> $40.00</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electricity:</strong></td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Last month’s bill: $26.38 + late fees $10.00 = $36.38</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This month’s bill: $28.74</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Telephone/Internet/Cable (Basic Family Bundle Plan):</strong> $61.99</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Communication at all times is important. The internet plan is essential because Kenzie is a gamer)</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household</strong></td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clothing Detergent/Cleaner: $5</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Paper towel: $3.99</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Toilet Paper: $3.99</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New houseplant: $4.99</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dishwashing liquid soap: $1.97</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Toothpaste: $2.99</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Laundromat:</strong> $9 per week (4 weeks in a month)</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation:</strong> $5 per trip: food shopping, doctor, volunteering</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic ticket for broken tail light: $38</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car repairs (fix broken tail light): $120</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kenzie</strong></td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shoes (too small): $21.77</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Jeans (too small): $12.99</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gaming headphones (Kenzie’s old set stopped working): $38.99</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School project: $6.99</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self</strong></td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New dress for job interview: $29.99</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nail manicure: $25</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recreation</strong></td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ice cream cones (after playground and park visits): $5 per trip</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mommy’s night out without Kenzie (neighbor will babysit for free)</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movies and transportation: $35</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charitable giving – Monthly contribution to a non-profit:</strong> $5</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Total** ______

Suggested Activities: Science

The 4-1-1
There are many resources on the internet that give information that the homeless population could use to tell them where to get food, clothing, health information, etc., but many do not have internet service. Help your students brainstorm a way to get information out that could be used without the internet. How would you distribute this information? (K–6)

Carry Me
Many of the homeless population have to carry around all their possessions with them because they do not have a place for them. Using a paper bag or common classroom supplies, have your students construct baskets to carry as much weight as possible. (K–6)

The Heat is On!
Many schools and churches hold canned food drives in order to donate food to homeless families. Sometimes this is more frustrating than helpful because they do not have ways to open and/or heat the food. Work with your students to draw a design for a machine that can open a can with common household items. Can you think of a way to warm the food without having access to a microwave or stove? (K–6)

Insulators
Staying warm on cold nights is a necessity for those who do not have shelter. With your students, brainstorm ways to stay warm outside. Are there certain materials that insulate better than others? Are there certain parts of your body that are able to absorb heat better than others? How can you keep these things dry during times when it is raining? (K–6)

Clean Water
Water is something everyone has to have in order to survive. How can someone purify water so they don't have to drink dirty water? (K–6)

Materials
- Large plastic soda or juice bottle
- Vase or tall drinking glass
- Gravel or small stones
- Clean Sand
- Activated Charcoal
- Cotton balls, small cloth or coffee filter
- Gardening dirt
- Water
- Scissors or knife
Instructions

1. Cut off the bottom of an old plastic soda or juice bottle using scissors or a knife.
2. Place the bottle upside down into the vase or tall drinking glass.
3. Place cotton balls, cloth, or a coffee filter inside the bottle as the first layer. The first layer should be about one to two inches thick.
4. Add an inch of activated charcoal as the second layer on top of the cotton layer.
5. Over the charcoal, add about two inches of gravel or small stones as the third layer.
6. Add about three to four inches of clean sand on top of the gravel.
7. Add gravel to the bottle as the final layer. Leave about a half inch of space from the top of the upside down bottle.
8. Add dirt to a glass of water to create muddy water. Alternatively, get creative and add other things like glitter, beads, cooking oil or other materials to make dirty water.
9. Pour the glass of muddy water on top of the homemade water filter and watch the water drip clean into the glass below.

How to Test the Water

For this experiment, it is best to test the water before and after the filtration.

Before filtration:

1. To start, ask the child to make a hypothesis or prediction about the experiment.
2. Pour two glasses of water from the kitchen faucet. The first glass will serve as the control. The second glass will be "dirty."
3. Dirty the "dirty" water with materials found around the house. The "dirty" water can contain things like dirt, potting soil, glitter, dish detergent, kitchen oils, among other materials found around the house.
4. Have the children test the two glasses of water with a home drinking water test kit, like the First Alert Drinking Water Test Kit.

After filtration:

1. Pour each glass of water through the homemade water filter.
2. Collect the filtered water in a glass.
3. Test both water samples after filtration using the same home drinking water test kit.
4. Compare all the water samples. Did the homemade water filter clean the "dirty" water sample? Is the filtered "dirty" water now the same as the control?

https://science.lovetoknow.com/science-fair-projects/homemade-water-filter-science-project
Lesson Plan Contributor: Katrina Smith, tenured Elementary Science Educator, LSSD-Lebanon, TN : Consultant
Kenzie, the coder

What is coding & why is it important?
Coding is the process of creating steps or instructions to tell a computer what to do. You can find code in many things: our phones and video games—even concert lights, TVs and 3D printers use code!
Learning to code is learning the language of computers.

Coding teaches not only STEM skills but also many life skills:
- **Teamwork**: Kids work together to solve complex problems, just like computer programmers.
- **Confidence**: Coding is a great way to build math and reasoning skills in a low-pressure way. Kids also gain public speaking skills when they share what they learned with friends.
- **Brainstorming & Planning**: Kids gain the ability to take what is in their minds and bring it to life on their computer screens.
- **Persistence**: Learning to code involves a lot of problem solving. Making mistakes and then fixing them (“debugging”) is a very important skill for kids in school and for their future careers.
- **Logic & Reasoning**: Coding exposes kids to the process of following specific, logical steps to attain a desired outcome. Sometimes a coder will have to rework their code to attain their desired effect, and must think critically and creatively to achieve their goal.

To be a coder, you don’t have to be an expert!
A successful coder is persistent, creative, enjoys solving puzzles, likes a challenge, and loves to learn!

It’s ok to not be “STEM-minded” or great at math or science! If a child dreads STEM classes but loves art, writing, or music, coding is the perfect place to start. Coding integrates creativity with logic, and incorporates math in a way that’s low-pressure. Mistakes are common and nothing to be afraid of—just more opportunities to learn and explore!

You don’t have to end up as a software programmer. The skills that coding teaches are helpful in any career! You can draw a connection to any career by showing how that career uses logic, instruction-following, problem solving skills, teamwork, or technology.

Join the Fun! Learn to Code. Here are some engaging and fun coding activities for beginners to advanced coders of all interest! Find several coding videos, animations, interactive exercises and games below. Ready. Set. CODE!

- **Made With Code** - Code for Equality
- **Tynker**
- **BrainPop**
- **Run Marco**
- **Kodable**
- **Code.org**
- **Hour of Code activities**
- **Khan Academy**
- **TinkerCad**

Source: [https://www.techlearning.com/features/8-wonderful-websites-for-easy-coding-activities-for-any-age-or-level](https://www.techlearning.com/features/8-wonderful-websites-for-easy-coding-activities-for-any-age-or-level)
Suggested Activities: Music

Loud and Soft
Have your students sing a well-known song like “Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear” using the dynamics f (forte) and p (piano). Explain the difference between forte and piano. (K–2)

Musical Alphabet
Teach your students the musical alphabet. Have them write their own songs using the musical alphabet. Play their pieces for them. (K–2)

Up and Down
Show your students a copy of “Edwin, My Avatar” (See Music Example page 34–35). Can they point out when the melody moves up and when it moves down? Does the melodic direction of the music or the melody remind your students of any music in video games they play? (K–2)

What emotions are present in Earth to Kenzie?
In opera, emotion is represented in the music. Have your students listen to a major and minor scale. Ask them what emotions they hear in each scale. Can they think of instances why a composer may want to use a major key? Minor key? Do they remember any moments in Earth to Kenzie where a major key was used? Minor key? (3–5)

Rhythmic Play
Write a blank measure of 4/4 on the chalkboard. Then write a dotted eighth note. How many more can you fit in the measure? Is there any space (for rests) left over? Start over with a sixteenth note followed by a dotted eighth rest. How many of that pair can you fit in the measure? (4–6)

Cast the Role
When you see the opera, you will notice that each singer has a different voice type. Operatic voice types include soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass. Have your students arrange the voice parts from highest to lowest. Give them an example of the range of each voice part. What kind of voice do they think would play an evil villain? What kind of voice would play a young child? What about a Space Kitty? (4–6)

Between Notes
Teach your students the difference between half and whole steps. Using a piano keyboard as a visual may be helpful. See if they can determine the following to be either a half or whole step. (4–6)

- G–A
- E–F
- C–D
- B–Flat–C
- E–F–Sharp
“EDWIN, MY AVATAR”
FROM EARTH TO KENZIE

Music by Frances Pollock, Words by Jessica Murphy Moo
Teach your students this fun melody and they can become opera stars!

Things to listen for:
- The left hand in the piano part was inspired by video game music; ask your students if it reminds them of any music in video games they play.
- The notes and rhythm when Kenzie sings, “Edwin, my Avatar!” repeat throughout the opera. Help your students identify when it comes back, and ask them for reasons for the repetition.

K.

{AVATAR flexes his muscles.}

K.

{AVATAR does a little hair flick.}

K.

{EDWIN does a cool Avatar move.}
ar - tist extr’ or di-naire! Rock - ets are the way to go on

ho - li - day from gra - vi - ty’s night - mare.

Rock-ets, by de-fi-ni - tion, car-ry their own fuel. Rock-ets are, by de-fi-ni - tion

oh, so cool!
gliss. (sweep, chromatic)
ANSWER KEY

taxidriver

kennzziie

homelnesss

home

familysheelter

planetcatulon

eppddrr

eddie