



Ballet San Antonio®
CARMEN (6-8)
EDUCATOR GUIDE



Charline & Red McCombs
ARTS EDUCATION FUND
The Tobin Center

Educator Guide

Created by: Dr. Kimberly Stephenson

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Ballet San Antonio®

The mission of Ballet San Antonio, a professional ballet company, is to share the splendor of dance through diverse artistic performances and outreach programs that reflect, promote, and enrich the cultural heritage of the South Texas community. BSA holds an uncompromising commitment to continually attract and nurture exceptional professional dancers, create distinctive performances, and make dance accessible to the widest possible audiences through partnerships with local organizations.

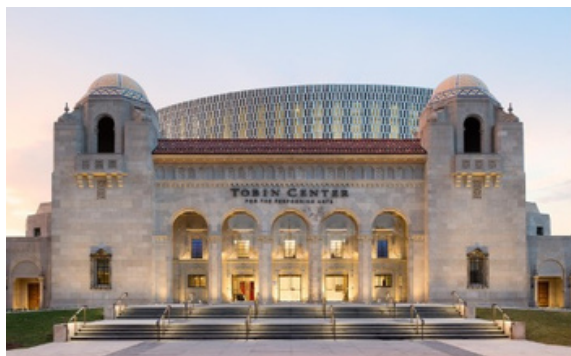
Ballet San Antonio is one of the Resident Companies
of the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts.
Balletsanantonio.org

Carmen

Youth Performance (traditional lighting and sound, house lights lowered)
February 19, 2027

Performance: 1 hour long (from two acts to one hour performance)
Recommended Audience: 2nd - 6th; MS / HS: Dance, Theatre, and ELA

Location:
Tobin Center for the Performing Arts
100 Auditorium Circle
San Antonio, TX 78205
www.tobincenter.org



Welcome to the Show!



Welcome to the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts!

Dear Educators, Students, and Adventurous Audience Members:

The music begins. The rhythm catches you. And before you know it, Carmen has entered the room.

Welcome to the Ballet San Antonio Carmen Education Guide, your invitation to explore a story filled with bold choices, unforgettable music, complicated relationships, and one fiercely independent character who has captivated audiences for more than 150 years.

At The Tobin Center, we believe the best performance experiences begin before the curtain rises. Inside this guide, you'll discover the history, music, characters, movement, and theatrical artistry behind Carmen. You'll also explore how a story can travel from novella to opera to ballet, changing each time a new artist asks, How will I tell it?

Carmen gives us plenty to think about. What does it mean to be free? What happens when love becomes jealousy or control? How do the choices we make affect others? And how can dancers communicate all of that without speaking a single word?

As you watch Ballet San Antonio, pay attention to more than the steps. Listen to the music. Notice the relationships. Watch who moves toward whom—and who moves away. Look for moments of confidence, conflict, freedom, and consequence. The dancers' bodies are telling you the story.

Whether this is your first ballet or you already know the famous melodies of Carmen, come ready to look a little closer, listen a little differently, and discover something new. The music is ready. The dancers are ready. The choices belong to Carmen.

Welcome to the show!

Dr. Kimberly Stephenson
Director of Education
Tobin Center for the Performing Arts



A Short History of Carmen



The story of Carmen began before the famous opera. In 1845, French writer Prosper Mérimée published the novella “Carmen,” a dramatic story set in Spain about a fiercely independent woman and the soldier Don José, whose growing jealousy and obsession lead to tragedy.

Nearly 30 years later, French composer Georges Bizet transformed the story into an opera. “Carmen” premiered in Paris in 1875, featuring music that audiences around the world still recognize today, including the famous “Habanera” and “Toreador Song.” Although its first audiences had mixed reactions to the opera’s unconventional characters and tragic story, “Carmen” soon became one of the most frequently performed operas in the world.

Since then, artists have reimagined “Carmen” through film, theatre, music, and dance. Choreographers have been especially drawn to its powerful music and themes of freedom, desire, jealousy, choice, and consequence.

In 2019, choreographer Yosvani Cortellan created his own “Carmen” for Ballet San Antonio. In 2027, his interpretation returns to the BSA stage, giving a new generation of audiences the opportunity to experience this more than 180-year-old story, told through movement.

Did You Know? — The BSA Carmen Edition

- Carmen existed before the opera! French author Prosper Mérimée published the novella *Carmen* in 1845, thirty years before Georges Bizet’s opera premiered.
- The Carmen we know has changed along the way. Mérimée’s novella, Bizet’s opera, and later ballet adaptations tell different versions of the story. Each artist chooses what to keep, change, emphasize, or leave behind.
- Carmen was unusual for a 19th-century leading character. She insists on making her own choices, particularly about whom she loves. That fierce independence is one reason artists and audiences have continued debating and reinterpreting her character for generations.
- Bizet never knew how famous *Carmen* would become. The opera received a mixed response when it premiered in Paris in 1875. Bizet died only three months later, at age 36, before *Carmen* achieved its enormous international success.
- You probably know *Carmen* even if you think you don’t! Music from the opera, especially the “Habanera” and “Toreador Song,” has appeared throughout popular culture in movies, television, cartoons, commercials, and more.
- Ballet San Antonio has its own *Carmen*. Choreographer Yosvani Cortellan created this interpretation specifically for BSA in 2019, drawing upon Bizet’s famous music while developing his own movement vocabulary and approach to the characters.
- Cortellan knew *Carmen* from the dancer’s side first. Before choreographing BSA’s production, he had performed in other versions of *Carmen*. When creating his own ballet, however, he chose to approach the story with a fresh choreographic perspective.
- The story changes when the singing stops. In Bizet’s opera, characters tell us what they think and feel through words and music. In ballet, movement, gesture, partnering, facial expression, music, costume, and design must communicate those ideas without dialogue.
- *Carmen* has danced many different dances. Choreographers around the world have created their own versions of the story, demonstrating that there is no single “correct” way for *Carmen* to move or behave. Ballet San Antonio’s *Carmen* is one interpretation in a long tradition of artists asking who this complicated character is.

Ballet San Antonio®

About Ballet San Antonio's Carmen

What Makes This Carmen Different?

There is no single ballet version of “Carmen.” Yosvani Cortellan created his interpretation specifically for Ballet San Antonio in 2019, choosing to start fresh despite having danced in other productions of the story. His version focuses on the human relationships and powerful emotions at its center, exploring love, passion, jealousy, freedom, and the consequences of choice through expressive movement and theatrical storytelling.

Meet the Choreographer

Yosvani Cortellan is a Cuban American dancer, choreographer, and educator—and a former Ballet San Antonio dancer. Trained in the Cuban dance tradition, his work draws upon classical ballet, contemporary dance, theatrical performance, his Cuban roots, and an international career in dance. Today, he serves as Dance Program Coordinator at Saint Mary's Hall in San Antonio.



Yosvani Cortellan, choreographer
Photo courtesy of KENS 5, 2019.

Cortellan describes “Carmen” as a story particularly connected to his own artistic temperament: one filled with love, passion, energy, and drama. His choreography combines technical ballet with expressive movement and acting, asking dancers not only to perform the steps but to fully become the characters they portray.

The Music

Even if you have never seen “Carmen,” there is a good chance you have heard it. French composer Georges Bizet (1838–1875) wrote the music for the opera “Carmen,” which premiered in Paris in 1875. Its melodies, including the famous “Habanera” and “Toreador Song,” have become some of the most recognizable music in classical repertoire.

In the opera, words and music tell us what the characters want and feel. In the ballet, Bizet's music remains, but Cortellan's choreography and the dancers' bodies must do the talking.

Listen closely. Bizet gives you the music. Cortellan gives it movement. Together, they give us “Carmen.”

KENS 5. (2019). Cuban-born ballet choreographer inspires passions and fulfills his dream in San Antonio [Photograph]. KENS 5.

BSA's Carmen: 2019-2027

2019 — A New Carmen Takes the Stage

Ballet San Antonio premieres Yosvani Cortellan's original "Carmen." A former BSA dancer who had performed in other versions of the story, Cortellan approaches the ballet with fresh eyes, creating his own choreography around Bizet's famous music and the story's themes of love, passion, freedom, jealousy, and consequence.

2027 — "Carmen" Returns

Eight years later, Cortellan's "Carmen" returns to the Ballet San Antonio stage. A new group of dancers brings the choreography to life for a new audience, demonstrating something special about live performance: the choreography may return, but no two performances can ever be exactly the same.

Same Ballet. New Moment.

A ballet is not preserved on a page or screen, it lives in the bodies of the dancers performing it. New artists bring their own movement qualities, relationships, interpretations, and experiences to established choreography.

In 2027, BSA isn't simply repeating "Carmen." It is bringing the story to life again.

Carmen: From Novelle to Opera to Ballet

For more than 180 years, artists have continued to reinterpret “Carmen.” The story began with words on a page, became one of the world’s most famous operas, and eventually found another language: dance.

From the Page

French writer Prosper Mérimée published the novella “Carmen” in 1845. His story introduces Carmen as a fiercely independent woman whose relationship with Don José becomes increasingly dangerous as his jealousy and obsession grow. The novella established the characters and conflicts that later artists would transform in very different ways.

To the Opera Stage

Composer Georges Bizet and librettists Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy adapted Mérimée’s story into the opera “Carmen,” which premiered in Paris in 1875. They changed characters, relationships, and parts of the story while Bizet’s unforgettable music gave Carmen a new voice... literally. Through songs such as the “Habanera,” audiences hear Carmen express her ideas about love and freedom herself.

And into Ballet

When “Carmen” becomes a ballet, something important disappears: the words. Choreographers must decide how movement can communicate the characters, relationships, conflicts, and ideas once expressed through dialogue and song. In 2019, Yosvani Cortellan created his own interpretation for Ballet San Antonio, using Bizet’s music while allowing choreography, gesture, partnering, expression, and theatrical design to carry the story.

What Changes Along the Way?

Every adaptation requires choices.

What stays? What changes? What disappears? What becomes more important?

As you watch Ballet San Antonio’s “Carmen,” consider how a story can survive for generations, not because artists tell it exactly the same way, but because each new artist finds another way to tell it.

The Music of Carmen



Even if you have never seen Carmen, you may already know its music! Georges Bizet filled his 1875 opera with bold rhythms, memorable melodies, and dramatic contrasts that help us understand the characters and anticipate what might happen next.

The “Habanera”

Habanera — A Cuban dance and musical style whose name means “from Havana.” Its distinctive rhythm can be heard in Carmen’s famous aria, “L’amour est un oiseau rebelle.” (“Love is a rebellious bird”)

One of opera’s most famous melodies, the “Habanera” introduces Carmen and her ideas about love and freedom. Its distinctive rhythm comes from a style of dance that developed in Cuba and became popular in Europe during the 19th century. In the opera, Carmen sings that love cannot be controlled—a musical idea that tells us a great deal about her character.

The “Toreador Song”

Toreador — A bullfighter, especially a term historically used outside Spain for someone who fights bulls in an arena. In Carmen, Escamillo is the famous toreador celebrated in the “Toreador Song.”

Did You Know? In Spanish, torero is the more accurate term for a bullfighter; toreador became widely familiar through Bizet’s Carmen.

Bold, confident, and immediately recognizable, the “Toreador Song” is associated with Escamillo, the celebrated bullfighter. Its strong rhythm and triumphant melody help establish his confidence and public personality before the story moves toward its final conflict.

Music Tells the Story

Bizet uses changes in tempo, dynamics, rhythm, melody, and instrumentation to move between celebration, romance, tension, jealousy, and danger. Sometimes the music tells us how a scene feels before the characters reveal what is happening.

From Voice to Movement

In the opera, singers use words and music to communicate their characters' thoughts and emotions. Ballet San Antonio's dancers have a different challenge: the words are gone, but Bizet's music remains.

Listen for how Yosvani Cortellan's choreography responds to the score. Does a dancer follow the rhythm or move against it? Does a musical phrase become a gesture? Does the energy change when a familiar melody returns?

Listen Like a Choreographer

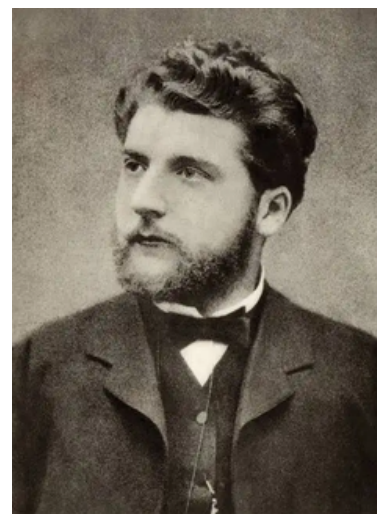
As you watch, listen for:

- RHYTHM — What patterns can you hear—and see in the movement?
- TEMPO — How does speed affect the dancers' energy?
- DYNAMICS — What changes when the music grows louder or softer?
- MELODY — Do certain melodies seem connected to particular characters or ideas?
- MOOD — How does the music influence what you expect to happen?

Bizet wrote music for voices. Ballet gives that music bodies.

Meet George Bizet

Georges Bizet (1838-1875) was a French composer who showed extraordinary musical talent from a young age, entering the Paris Conservatoire before he was ten years old. Today, he is best known for “Carmen,” with its unforgettable melodies, dramatic rhythms, and colorful orchestral music. Sadly, Bizet died at just 36, only three months after “Carmen” premiered, never knowing that it would become one of the most famous and frequently performed operas in the world.



Encyclopaedia Britannica. (n.d.).
Georges Bizet [Photograph].

From Opera to Ballet: Where Did the Words Go?

In Bizet's opera, the characters tell us what they think, feel, fear, and want through words and song. Carmen sings about freedom and love. Don José expresses devotion, jealousy, and desperation. Escamillo announces his confidence to the world.

But in ballet, the words disappear.

So how do we know what anyone is thinking?

The Body Becomes the Voice

A choreographer translates ideas once expressed through language into movement. A reaching hand can become an invitation. Turning away can become rejection. A lift can suggest trust, while pulling someone back might suggest control. Using Body, Energy, Space, and Time (BEST), dancers can communicate relationships and emotions without explaining them aloud.

But the Music Remembers

Here's what makes "Carmen" especially interesting: Bizet's music remains. Audiences familiar with the opera may know the words that originally accompanied a melody, even though no one is singing them. When the famous "Habanera" begins, the music carries Carmen's confidence and independence into the ballet. Her message is clear: her heart, her choices, and her freedom belong to her. Now the choreographer must decide: What does that idea look like?

Watch the Relationships

Pay particular attention to partnering. Who approaches? Who retreats? Who leads? Who follows? Who reaches and who pulls away? In a story concerned with freedom, desire, jealousy, and control, the distance between two bodies can sometimes communicate as much as an entire page of dialogue.

Listen. Watch. Interpret.

In opera, you can listen to Carmen tell you who she is. In ballet, watch what she shows you. The words may be gone, but the story still has plenty to say.



Ballet Vocabulary

- **Ballet** — A form of dance that uses precise, highly developed movement technique to communicate music, emotion, and story.
- **Arabesque** — A position in which a dancer stands on one leg while extending the other leg behind the body.
- **Choreography** — The movements and steps created and arranged to make a dance.
- **Corps de Ballet** — A group of dancers who perform together as an ensemble.
- **Pas de Deux** — A dance performed by two dancers, often used to show a relationship between characters.
- **Plié** — A bending of the knees while keeping the body upright. Pliés are fundamental to many ballet movements.
- **Pirouette** — A turn performed on one leg.
- **Relevé** — A movement in which a dancer rises onto the balls of the feet or onto pointe.
- **Tableau** — A stage picture or arrangement of performers that creates a striking visual moment.
- **En Pointe** — Dancing on the tips of the toes while wearing specially constructed pointe shoes.
- **Partnering** — Movement in which dancers work together, often supporting, lifting, turning, or balancing one another.
- **Gesture** — A movement, often of the hands, arms, head, or body, used to communicate an idea, emotion, or intention.
- **Choreographer** — The artist who creates and organizes the movements that dancers perform.
- **Characterization** — The ways a dancer uses movement, expression, posture, and energy to create a believable character.
- **Dynamics** — The qualities of movement, such as sharp, smooth, powerful, gentle, sudden, or sustained. Changing dynamics can reveal shifts in emotion or relationships.
- **Musicality** — The way a dancer responds to and interprets music through movement, rhythm, phrasing, and expression. This is especially important in “Carmen,” where Bizet’s music helps carry the story.
- **Bodice** — The fitted upper portion of a costume or dress. Ballet bodices are designed to create a character’s look while allowing the dancer to move freely.

Designing Carmen: Costume, Lighting, Scenery & Atmosphere

Designing Carmen

Before a dancer takes a single step, design is already telling us something. Costume, lighting, scenery, and the arrangement of performers help establish the world of Carmen and give audiences clues about character, relationships, freedom, conflict, and power.

Costume: Who Are You?

Costume can communicate character, time, place, personality, and social role. Designers consider color, fabric, texture, shape, and silhouette while also making sure dancers can turn, leap, partner, and move freely.

Watch for it in Carmen

Notice how costumes may distinguish Carmen, Don José, Escamillo, and the ensemble from one another. Look beyond color: Does a costume restrict or emphasize movement? Does it make someone command attention or blend into the crowd? What does the costume suggest before the dancer even begins to move?

Lighting: Where Should We Look?

Lighting does much more than make dancers visible. It can direct our attention, separate characters from a crowd, create intimacy, intensify conflict, and transform the emotional temperature of a scene.

Watch for it in Carmen

This is a story filled with heat, attraction, celebration, jealousy, and danger. Notice how changes in brightness, shadow, focus, and intensity may help the stage shift between those emotions. When the mood changes, does the light change with it?

Scenery: Where Are We?

Scenery helps establish the physical world of a story. Rather than recreating every location literally, designers can use architecture, levels, entrances, open space, and selected scenic elements to give audiences just enough information to imagine the rest.

Watch for it in Carmen

The story moves through public and private spaces, and that difference can matter. Notice how the stage may suggest community, celebration, intimacy, or confinement. Ask yourself how the physical environment affects the choices the characters are able to make.

Tableau: Read the Picture

A tableau is a carefully arranged stage picture. Where performers stand, whom they face, how close they are to one another, and where they look can communicate relationships without a single word.

Watch for it in Carmen

Look for moments when the dancers create a particularly strong stage picture. Who is at the center? Who surrounds whom? Who stands alone? Who is watching? In a story about freedom, desire, jealousy, and control, the placement of bodies can reveal who holds power—and when that power begins to shift.

Atmosphere: Put It All Together

Atmosphere is the overall feeling created by everything happening onstage. Music begins. Light changes. Costumes move through the space. Dancers enter, separate, connect, and form a tableau. Together, those choices can make the same stage feel joyful, romantic, tense, dangerous, or defiant.

Watch for it in Carmen

Pay attention to moments when you feel the emotional temperature change. Instead of simply saying, “That felt tense,” look for the evidence. What changed in the movement, music, lighting, scenery, costumes, or relationships that made you feel it?

See the Choices

Design is never just decoration. Every artistic choice can help us understand the story and Carmen is a story built around choices. Look closely. The stage may tell you who has power, who wants it, and who refuses to give hers away.



You’ve heard the music. Now see her move, feel her power, and watch Carmen choose her own path.

Carmen Through the Years



1845 — Carmen Appears on the Page

French writer Prosper Mérimée publishes the novella “Carmen,” introducing the fiercely independent title character and her complicated relationship with Don José.

1875 — Carmen Becomes an Opera

Composer Georges Bizet, with librettists Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, transforms Mérimée’s story into an opera. “Carmen” premieres in Paris on March 3, 1875.

1875 — Bizet Dies

Just three months after the premiere, Bizet dies at age 36, never knowing that “Carmen” would become one of the world’s most celebrated operas.

1915 — Carmen Goes to the Movies

Cecil B. DeMille directs a silent-film adaptation starring opera singer Geraldine Farrar, one of many times filmmakers would bring Carmen to the screen.

1943 — Carmen Meets Broadway

Carmen Jones reimagines Bizet’s opera with an all-Black cast, new English lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, and a story set in contemporary America. A film adaptation follows in 1954.

1949 — Carmen Becomes a Ballet

Choreographer Roland Petit premieres his influential ballet “Carmen” in London, demonstrating how Bizet’s story and music could be transformed through dance.

1967 — A New Carmen Score for Ballet

Composer Rodion Shchedrin creates the “Carmen Suite” for his wife, legendary ballerina Maya Plisetskaya. Based on Bizet’s music, it becomes closely associated with ballet interpretations of the story.

1983 — Flamenco Reimagines the Story

Filmmaker Carlos Saura releases “Carmen,” using flamenco and a story-within-a-story to explore the line between performing Carmen and becoming Carmen.

2019 — Ballet San Antonio Creates Its Own “Carmen”

Former BSA dancer Yosvani Cortellan choreographs a new interpretation specifically for Ballet San Antonio, bringing his own perspective to the familiar characters, music, and themes.

2027 — Carmen Returns to BSA

Eight years after its premiere, Cortellan’s “Carmen” returns to the Ballet San Antonio stage, where a new moment, new audience, and new performances give the story another life.

Why Does Carmen Keep Coming Back?

At the center of all these versions is a character who insists on something surprisingly modern: she will decide for herself.

Who will she love?

How will she live?

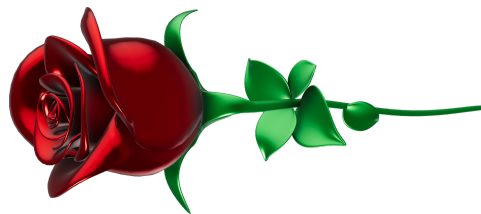
Who gets to make choices about her life?

Different generations have answered those questions differently, and that is part of what makes Carmen such an enduring character.

What Comes Next?

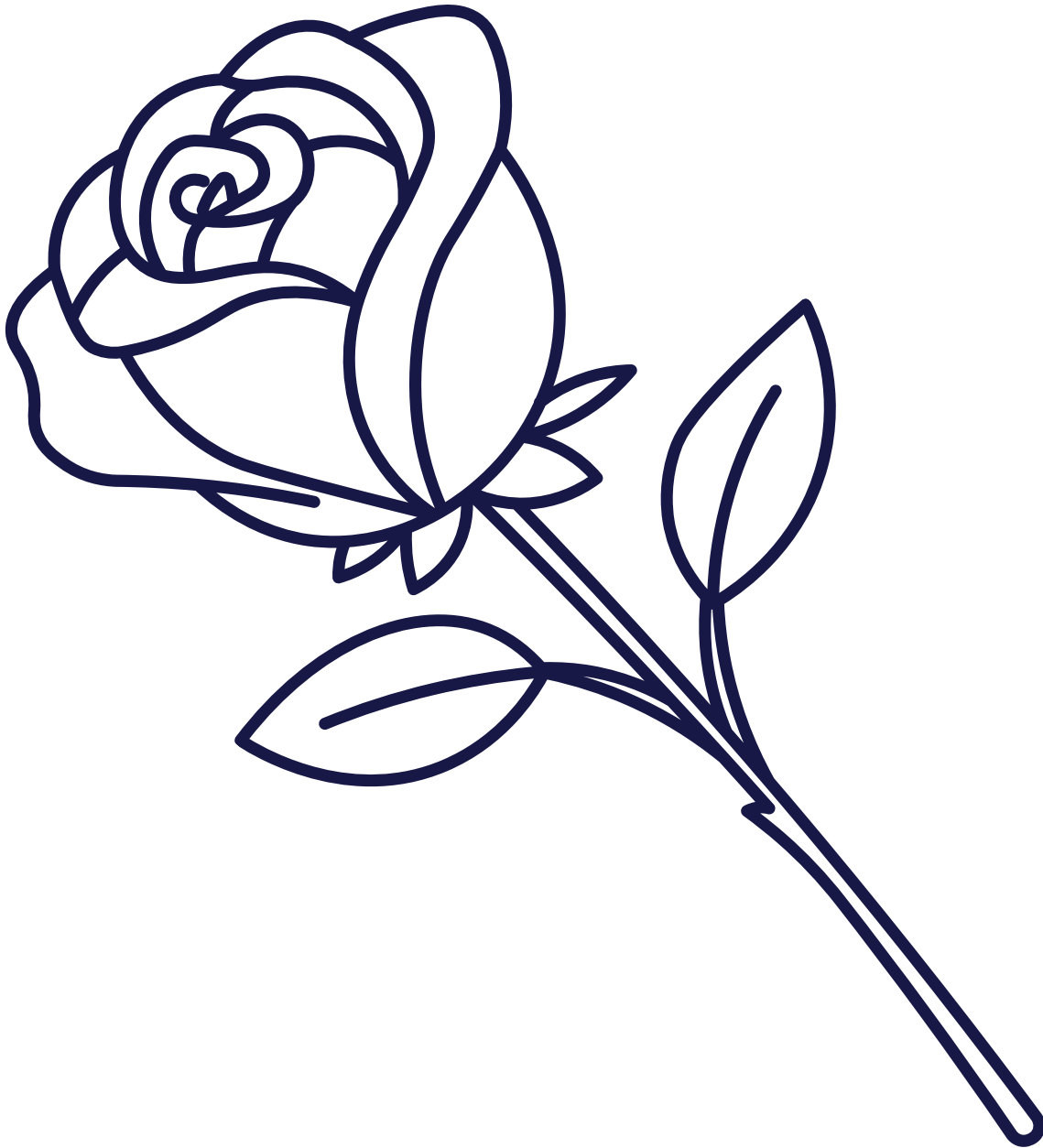
For more than 180 years, Carmen has traveled through literature, opera, film, musical theatre, ballet, and popular culture—and every generation has found something new in her story.

**The story keeps changing. The music keeps playing.
And Carmen keeps refusing to stand still.**



Color Exploration

Name: _____ Date: _____



What color is freedom? What color is courage? Use your choices to make this rose tell a story.

The flower is an important symbol in Carmen, connecting Carmen and Don José from their first encounter.

Main Characters

Carmen — A bold, independent woman who values her freedom and insists on making her own choices, especially about love.

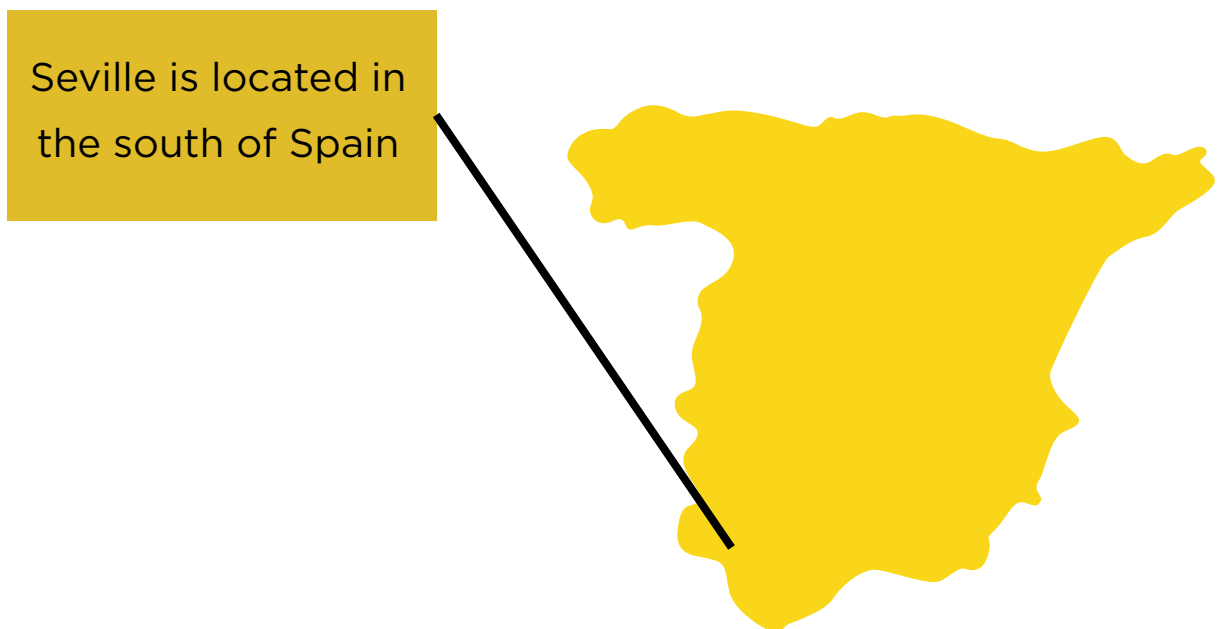
Don José — A soldier who falls deeply in love with Carmen, but whose love becomes increasingly shaped by jealousy, obsession, and a desire to control her.

Escamillo — A celebrated and confident bullfighter who becomes interested in Carmen, creating greater conflict between Carmen and Don José.

Micaëla — A young woman from Don José's hometown who cares for him and represents a very different path from the one he chooses with Carmen.

Zuniga — Don José's commanding officer, whose interactions with Carmen contribute to the growing tension and conflict.

Frasquita & Mercédès — Carmen's friends and companions, who share her world and provide another perspective on the relationships and dangers developing around them.



How to Talk about Ballet: The B.E.S.T. Method

You don't have to be a dancer to talk about dance! But there is a difference between sharing an opinion and making an observation. "Carmen was powerful" or "Don José seemed angry," tells us how you felt about what you saw but it doesn't tell us what happened onstage that made you feel that way.

When we talk about dance, we begin with evidence: what we can actually see and hear. Describing movement helps us slow down, notice details, support our ideas, and understand how dancers and choreographers communicate without words. Once we describe what happened, we can use those observations to explain what we think it might mean. That's where B.E.S.T. comes in!

B — BODY

What is the body doing? Look at shapes, gestures, balance, facial expressions, and which body parts lead the movement. Is the dancer reaching, twisting, stretching, collapsing, or holding completely still? Does Carmen stand tall, reach toward someone, turn away, or hold her ground? What might her body tell you about her character?

E — ENERGY

How is the movement performed? Movement can be sharp or smooth, powerful or gentle, sudden or sustained, tense or relaxed. Compare the energy of Carmen, Don José, and Escamillo. Who moves with confidence? Who becomes tense or unpredictable? Does that change as the story unfolds?

S — SPACE

Where does the movement happen? Notice levels, directions, pathways, distance, and relationships between dancers. Who moves toward Carmen? When does she move toward someone and when does she create distance? Who controls the space between them?

T — TIME

When and how quickly does movement happen? Look for changes in speed, rhythm, repetition, pauses, and stillness. Does a relationship that begins with slow, connected movement become faster or more interrupted? What might that change communicate?

From Opinion to Observation

Instead of: “Carmen is independent,” start with what you observed.

“Carmen moves directly across the stage while the other dancers follow her. She repeatedly changes direction without waiting for them.”

Then interpret: “Her use of space makes her appear confident and determined to choose her own path.”

OBSERVE → DESCRIBE → INTERPRET

Your interpretation may be different from someone else’s—and that’s okay. What matters is being able to point to what you saw and heard to support your thinking.

Don’t just decide who Carmen is. Watch how she moves—and let her show you.

Pre-Show Discussion Questions

- What does the name Carmen make you think of? Where might those ideas have come from?
- Have you heard any of Georges Bizet's music from Carmen before? Where?
- Carmen has been told through a novella, opera, film, and dance. What might change when a story is told through ballet without words?
- Carmen is often described as fiercely independent. How might a dancer show independence, confidence, or freedom through movement?
- The story explores choice, freedom, love, jealousy, and consequence. What do those ideas mean to you before seeing the ballet?
- How might Body, Energy, Space, and Time (BEST) help you understand the relationships between characters?
- What questions do you have about the story, music, ballet, or this particular production?
- Who do you expect Carmen to be? After the performance, come back to this question and see whether Cortellan's Carmen matched—or challenged—your expectations.

Post-Show Discussion Questions

- When you watched Carmen, what did the performance make you think, feel, or wonder about?
- What did you see that you expected? What surprised you or challenged your expectations?
- Before the performance, who did you expect Carmen to be? How did Cortellan's choreography shape or change your understanding of her?
- Choose one important moment. Using Body, Energy, Space, and Time (BEST), what did you observe in the dancers' movement?
- How did the movement between Carmen, Don José, and Escamillo communicate their relationships without words?
- Where did you see ideas of choice, freedom, jealousy, control, or consequence expressed onstage?
- How did Bizet's music affect the movement, mood, or way you understood a scene?
- How did costume, lighting, scenery, and tableau help tell the story?
- Now that you have seen Carmen, what new questions do you have?
- Who is Carmen to you now? What evidence from the performance supports your interpretation?

Writing Connections

Create your own advertisement for the performance.

- Write a review of the performance.
 - Include a show synopsis in your own words.
 - Include at least three positive comments.
 - Include one or two critiques / suggestions for improvement / something you would have liked to have seen in the performance that was not there.
- Describe a favorite moment.
- Create a poem or story based on the show you just saw.

NOTE: Any of the pre- or post-show discussion questions could be reworded to a writing connection.

TEKS – ELAR:

Skill Area	6th	7th	8th	English II	English IV
Foundational Language Skills	110.22(b)(1)ABC	110.23(b)(1)ABC	110.24(b)(1)ABC	110.37(b)(1)ABC	110.39(b)(1)ABC
Respond to Sources	110.22(b)(6)ABC DE	110.23(b)(6)ABC DE	110.24(b)(6)ABC DE	110.37(b)(5)ABCD EFGHIJ	110.39(b)(5)ABCDE FGHIJ
Literary Elements	110.22(b)(7) ABCD	110.22(b)(7) ABCD	110.22(b)(7)ABCD	110.22(b)(7)ABCD	110.22(b)(7)ABCD
Recognize & Analyze Genre	110.22(b)(8) ACDE	110.23(b)(8) ACDE	110.24(b)(8)ACDE	110.37(b)(7)ACD i-iii, E i-iii, F	110.39(b)(7)CD i-ii, E i-iii, F
Author's Purpose & Craft	110.22(b)(9)ABC	110.23(b)(9)ABC	110.24(b)(9)ABC	110.37(b)(8)ABC DEFG	110.39(b)(8)ABC DEFG
Composition: Writing Process	110.22(b)(10)AB i-iii, CD i-v, E	110.23(b)(10)AB i-iii, CD i-v, E	110.24(b)(10)AB i-iii, CD i-v, E	110.37(b)(9)AB i-ii, CD i-vi, E	110.39(b)(9)AB i-iii, CDE
Generate Questions	110.22(b)(12) ACDE	110.22(b)(12) ACDE	110.22(b)(12) ACDE	110.22(b)(12)ACDE	110.22(b)(12)ACDE

What's the Pointe?

Ballet Slippers vs. Pointe Shoes

Why do some ballet dancers seem to float on the tips of their toes while others dance with their whole foot close to the floor? The shoes make different kinds of movement possible. Ballet slippers and pointe shoes are designed for different techniques, but both help dancers move with control, precision, and expression. The choreographer, role, movement style, and dancer's training all help determine which shoe belongs onstage.

The Ballet Slipper: Stay Connected

A ballet slipper is a lightweight, flexible shoe usually made from soft leather or canvas. Its thin sole allows dancers to feel the floor while pointing, flexing, turning, jumping, and landing. Dancers of all ages and genders train and perform in ballet slippers. Because the shoe bends easily with the foot, it allows the dancer to move naturally through the entire foot while maintaining close contact with the floor.

The Pointe Shoe: Rise Up

A pointe shoe allows a specially trained dancer to rise onto the tips of the toes, or en pointe. Unlike a soft slipper, it contains a firm box surrounding the toes, a small flat platform at the tip, and a supportive shank beneath the foot. And no, there is no block of wood inside! Pointe work requires years of training, strength, balance, and proper alignment. The shoe provides support, but the dancer—not the shoe—does the balancing.

Did You Know?

Pointe shoes don't last very long! Professional dancers may wear out a pair in just one performance. Dancing, sweat, and repeated bending gradually soften the supportive box and shank until the shoes no longer provide the support the dancer needs. A professional dancer can easily use dozens, or even more than 100 pairs, in a season, depending on how much they perform en pointe.

So...What's the Pointe?

One shoe keeps the dancer closely connected to the floor; the other makes it possible to rise above it. Neither is "more ballet" than the other. They simply give dancers and choreographers different movement possibilities and different ways to tell a story.

Next time you watch a ballet, look down! Sometimes understanding the movement starts with understanding what's on the dancer's feet.

What's the Pointe?

Ballet Slippers vs. Pointe Shoes

Pointe Shoes

Vamp — The front portion of the shoe covering the toes and upper part of the foot.

Box — The firm structure surrounding and supporting the dancer's toes.

Shank — The supportive structure running beneath the sole and arch of the foot.

Platform — The flattened tip of the box on which the dancer balances when en pointe.

Sole — The outer bottom of the shoe.

Elastic & Ribbons — Help secure the shoe to the foot and ankle.



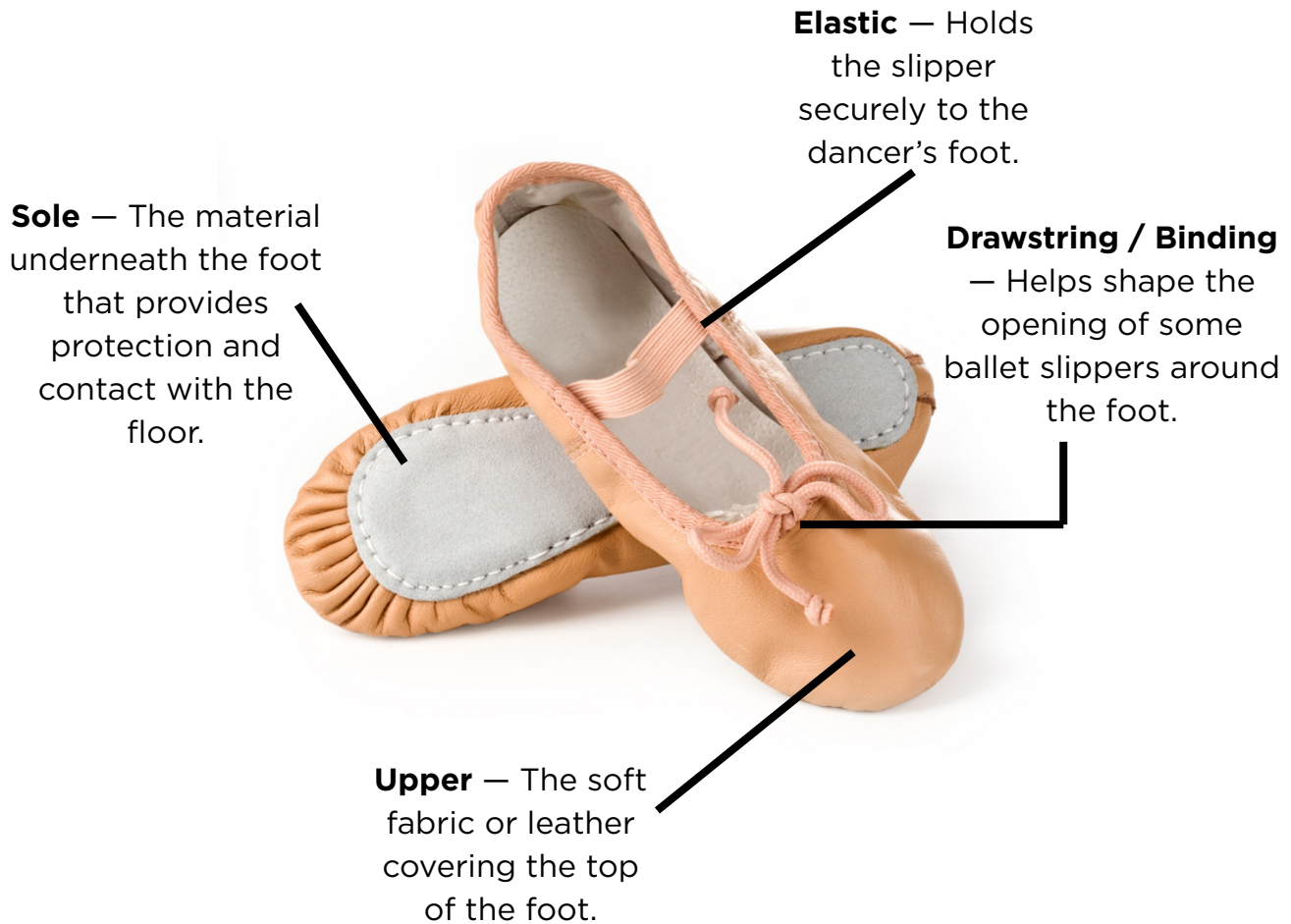
Think About It

Why does a pointe shoe need to be both strong and flexible?

What's the Pointe?

Ballet Slippers vs. Pointe Shoes

Slippers / Demi Pointe



Think About It

Ballet slippers are designed to be soft, thin, and flexible, allowing dancers to feel and move through the floor. How might dancing feel different if ballet slippers were thick, stiff, or heavy? What movements might become more difficult?

Carmen Has Entered the Chat: A Podcast Review



Grades: 6-12 | Time: 30-45 minutes

Focus: ELAR + Theatre/Dance

TEKS: ELAR 6-8 §110.22-§110.24(b)(1)(A-D), (5)(G), (9)(A-B), (11)(A-E)
Theatre MS 1-3: §117.211-§117.213(b)(1), (2)(C), (4)(A), (5)(C)

Objective: Students will create a short podcast using evidence from Ballet San Antonio's "Carmen" to describe, interpret, and evaluate how artistic choices communicated the story.

The Challenge

Working individually or with a partner, create a 2-3 minute podcast episode reviewing "Carmen." Your job is to say more than whether you liked the performance. Use the BEST Method (Body, Energy, Space, Time) and specific evidence from what you saw and heard to support your ideas.

Plan Your Podcast

Include:

- Hook: Introduce Carmen and grab your listener's attention.
- Observe: Describe one memorable moment using specific details from the movement, music, costume, lighting, scenery, or tableau.
- Listen: How did Bizet's music contribute to the mood or storytelling?
- Reflect: Did this production change your ideas about Carmen, freedom, choice, jealousy, or consequence?
- Sign Off: End with one final thought or question for your listeners.

Remember

A strong review moves beyond "I liked it" or "It was dramatic."

OBSERVE → DESCRIBE → INTERPRET

Example: "Carmen dance all around the stage and made eye contact with everyone. The movement and use of space made her seem confident, as though she didn't care who watched her or how they might think about her."

Add Some Fire

Connect Carmen to something beyond the stage. How does its exploration of freedom, choice, relationships, jealousy, or consequence connect to another book, film, performance, historical event, or experience you know?

What makes a story created more than 150 years ago still worth talking about today?

Stories That Choose Their Own Path

6th Grade

Esperanza Rising — Pam Muñoz Ryan

Esperanza must adapt when circumstances beyond her control completely change her life. Connect to Carmen through independence, resilience, identity, and the power to make choices.

***The Giver — Lois Lowry**

Jonas begins questioning a society in which individual choice has been sacrificed for order. A terrific connection to Carmen's central questions about freedom and who gets to control our choices.

7th Grade

The Outsiders — S. E. Hinton

Characters struggle with loyalty, identity, conflict, and choices that have lasting consequences. Compare how strong emotions can influence decisions and relationships.

A Wrinkle in Time — Madeleine L'Engle

Meg's journey asks her to resist control, trust herself, and understand the complicated power of love. Connect to Carmen through individuality, freedom, courage, and choice.

8th Grade

The House on Mango Street — Sandra Cisneros

Esperanza observes expectations placed upon girls and women while imagining a future she can define for herself. A particularly strong connection to voice, identity, independence, and agency.

Romeo and Juliet — William Shakespeare

Love, impulsive decisions, conflict, jealousy, and tragedy make this a natural companion to Carmen. Students can compare how each work asks whether powerful love can also become destructive.

Read With Carmen in Mind

As you read, consider: Who gets to make choices? Who tries to make choices for someone else? And what happens when those choices collide?

Theatre* Etiquette – Preparing for the Experience

Purpose:

Teaching theatre etiquette helps students understand that audience behavior directly affects a live performance. Unlike movies or TV, live theatre is a shared experience — the audience and the performers influence one another.

“Etiquette” means the expectations for polite or respectful behavior. Another word for etiquette is manners. These expectations often depend on the type of performance and its traditions.

Example:

At a **Gospel concert**, the audience may clap, sing, or move with the music — that’s part of the experience!

At a **Classical Orchestra concert**, the audience usually listens quietly and waits until the conductor lowers their hands before applauding.

When attending a performance at the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts, the following guidelines help students act respectfully and confidently as audience members.

Before the Show

- Arrive early: Allow time to find seats, use the restroom, and settle in calmly before the lights dim.
- Silence devices: Turn off or silence all phones, watches, and electronics to avoid noise or bright screens during the performance.
- Listen for instructions: Ushers or teachers may share information about seating, timing, or theatre rules.
- Discuss expectations: Remind students that live performances require focus, respect, and quiet observation.

During the Show

- Be attentive and quiet: Whispering, talking, or making noise distracts both the performers and other audience members. Performers can see and hear the audience.
- Stay seated: Unless there’s an emergency, students should remain in their seats. If someone must leave, they should do so quietly with help from an usher.
- Applaud appropriately:
 - Clap when the conductor or key performers enter.
 - Show appreciation after songs, dances, or acts — applause is a way of saying “thank you.”

- Respect the performance: Avoid unwrapping food, chewing gum loudly, or fidgeting. Encourage students to engage visually and emotionally — there's always something on stage to discover.
- No photography or video: Using cameras or phones can distract others and potentially endanger performers if flashes occur.
- Respond appropriately: Laugh, smile, or react when it fits the scene. Genuine responses show appreciation, but excessive noise or commentary can distract from the performance.

After the Show

- Stay for the curtain call: Performers return to the stage to bow — this is the audience's time to applaud and thank them.
 - If everyone stands while clapping, it's called a standing ovation — a sign of exceptional appreciation.
 - Occasionally, performers return for an encore (pronounced "ON-core") to perform an extra piece.
- Clean up: Dispose of wrappers, bottles, or papers to keep the theatre tidy for the next audience.
- Exit calmly: Walk quietly as you leave. Remind students that even soft talking becomes loud when hundreds of voices echo in the space.

Additional Tips for Students

- Posture matters: Sitting up straight helps others see and shows attentiveness.
- Show respect: Performers dedicate time and effort to their craft. Focused, polite listening demonstrates appreciation for their work.
- Ask for help when needed: Ushers (theatre staff) assist guests with seating, questions, or directions. Encourage students to approach them respectfully if help is needed.
- Be present: Encourage students to enjoy the live energy of the moment — no screens or distractions needed.

Teacher Tips

- Review theatre etiquette as part of your pre-trip classroom preparation. Discuss why these behaviors matter — link them to empathy, discipline, and teamwork.
- Role-play appropriate and inappropriate behaviors before the trip to reinforce expectations.
- Remind students that audience participation (like applause or laughter) is part of the performance energy — the goal is to contribute positively to the shared experience.

Key Takeaway

Middle school students are developing independence and awareness of social norms. Theatre etiquette helps students build self-control, empathy, and respect — essential skills not only for the arts but for life beyond the classroom.

About the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts



An Incredibly Powerful Vision

Situated along the banks of the San Antonio River in the city’s heart, the historic Municipal Auditorium, with its original facade preserved, has been transformed into a world-class venue. This theatrical icon is once again the pride of the river and a shining beacon of creativity, fine art, and downtown development. There is no better place — anywhere — to see and hear a live performance.

The remarkable flexibility of the 1,738-seat H-E-B Performance Hall, with its distinctive “flat floor” capability, opens the door for performances and events of almost any sort. The acoustics in the Hall can be “tuned” to fit the performance and physical set-up of the hall. The sound insulation throughout The Tobin Center enables simultaneous use of the Performance Hall, the Studio Theater, and the 600-seat River Walk Plaza.

Audiences can see and hear performers and hear performers and performances of every description at the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts, WHERE THE ARTS LIVE.

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[Tobin Center Floor Flip Video](#)



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As a non-profit organization, The Tobin Center relies on generous donors and arts advocates like you to help us sustain and grow our diverse array of cultural, educational, and artistic experiences that ensure people of all ages and communities have access to the performing arts.

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