



2 Lessons: Sun Science & Myth

OVERVIEW

Understanding the context of a musical work is an essential feature of the [FACETS Model](#). The context of *The Golden Queen* draws from both science and myth to tell the imaginative story about a majestic queen, her loyal subjects, and a lone sunflower.

In the first lesson, student will complete a written assignment, “Five Facts & a Story,” demonstrating basic research skills while they organize information about the context of the song.

In the second lesson, students will build on their learning from lesson 1 and demonstrate original thinking about the music when they create original cover art for a hypothetical second printing of the piece, informed by the music, facts, and myths about the sun.

LEARNING GOAL

Students will research and probe their prior knowledge about the sun, both scientific and mythological, creating deeper understanding and successful performances of *The Golden Queen*.

Lesson 1: Research and Report

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

Student copies of:

- [“Legends & Myths about the Sun”](#) resource
- [“Five Facts & a Story,”](#) graphic organizer worksheet

PROCESS

If time is limited, present only this section of the lesson.

1. Introduce the lesson activities with a statement in your own words similar to the following:

The sun is literally and figuratively the largest thing in the human environment. Her power has been recognized since the dawn of time, but the science surrounding the sun has only been

understood in more recent centuries. Consequently many myths and stories have been told to explain this critical phenomenon.

2. **The scientific stance:** Ask students to recall facts and information learned when studying the sun in a science/astronomy class. Or read the materials at the SPACE FACTS blog, <http://space-facts.com/the-sun/>. Remind students that this information, unlike the myths and legends, should be factual and from a scientific perspective.
3. **The mythological stance:** Select one of the sun myths from the resource sites included in the student Resource Pages and read it to the choir. Hold a short discussion about how humans used story and myth to understand and explain their world before scientific studies emerged.
4. Describe the assignment to students – one they will complete outside of class time. They can work alone, in pairs, or in small groups. The assignment is to identify and record at least five facts about the sun, and to find one myth that really drew their attention to share with the class. Provide multiple copies of the assignment organizer and set the due date. Each individual, pair, or group of students will hand in just one complete organizer.
5. After the assignment is completed, share student work in class. Post all summaries on bulletin boards, class computers, or on the choir web page for further sharing and future assignments.

Lesson 2: Create New Cover Art for GQ

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- Completed Lesson 1 materials
- Art supplies

PROCESS

This lesson activity can be done as a homework assignment, in music class, or in partnership with the art specialist in your school. If it is fulfilled in music class, have a variety of art materials on hand for students to use.

1. Pose an imaginary scenario: *The Golden Queen* has sold well and will be reprinted, but with a new, more colorful cover. Students will create their version of a new cover for music, one that reflects either the sun from a scientific perspective or from a mythological one. (Or perhaps even incorporating both perspectives if students have ideas about how to do this.) Tell students that their work should communicate their creative ideas based on what they know about the sun in legend and/or fact.
2. Begin by looking closely at the front and back covers of *The Golden Queen*. Study the cover of the music and what it communicates. Notice the layout is primarily a geometrical placement of text against a very bright orange and subdued grey and black bars and boxes.

- Read all the text on the front and back cover and determine what information it conveys:

Front cover: Title, composer, organization that commissioned the piece (paid for it), the voices needed, instrument needed, logos for the American Composers Forum and ChoralQuest®, and a stock number.

Back cover: Same two logos, addresses for American Composers Forum and the distributor – Hal Leonard, a paragraph about the ChoralQuest® series, a listing of the piece in the series, multiple identification information (the ISBN number, Score number, bar codes of ID numbers), and the price of a single copy of the piece.

- They will design a Front Cover only. They need not include ALL the above information in their Cover Design.
 - **Play the recording or sing *The Golden Queen* to stay connected to the musical work as they develop their visual arts interpretations of a cover.**
3. Provide some time for them to discuss ideas in a small group for what they might do to create this cover.
 4. In addition to their cover illustrations, students should also write a short artist’s statement about their work and what it conveys.
 5. Display student work in a classroom or hallway gallery.

EXTENSIONS

- This project might work well in collaboration with your visual arts specialists. They will have art materials and established processes which will help students do their creative work. HOWEVER, students might also be interested in working on their own at home with computer generated or simple materials they already have.
- Display the students’ cover art at the concert featuring *The Golden Queen*. Select one as the cover for your printed program.

ASSESSMENT

The completed “Five Facts and a Story” organizer and the cover illustrations and the paragraph provide evidence of what students know and understand about the music and its context.

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS: LEGENDS & MYTHS ABOUT THE SUN

MYTHS ABOUT THE SUN

From the beginning of time, people throughout the world and in all cultures told stories to explain natural phenomena. The sun, the largest and most amazing object in their world, was the subject of many myths. For example, solar myths were created to explain how the sun moved across the sky from east to west and where it went when it disappeared at night. Many myths were about gods and goddesses traveling in golden chariots (Helios, Apollo) or a man who carries a heavy burden on his back across the sky who must rest at night. The Egyptian sun god Ra journeyed across the sky in a sun boat. Each night he visited the underworld, and each morning was a re-birth of Ra as the sun rose again.

Some myths include the moon as a spouse or sibling. And, of course, solar eclipses produced many legends to explain this phenomenon. The stories describe evil spirits or a monster who devour the sun, or those telling of the sun falling from heaven to hide from sight.

You can read a famous Japanese myth below about how the goddess, Amaterasu, became so angry with her misbehaving brother that she hid in a cave and caused darkness to fall on the earth. It took a trick by the other gods to encourage her to come out and shine her light again.

Read more:

<http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Sp-Tl/Sun.html#ixzz3bkdu9m8T>

Amaterasu (a myth from Japan)

Amaterasu was the Sun goddess of the oldest Japanese religion called Shinto. When her brother Susanowo treated her badly, she hid in the cave of heaven and closed the entrance with an enormous stone. This made the world dark, and evil spirits came out of their hiding places.

In despair, a conference of the gods decided to trick Amaterasu into coming out by having a party near the cave. They put a big mirror in front of the cave and beautiful jewels on a tree. Uzume, the goddess of laughter, began a dance accompanied by loud music.

Hearing the music and laughter, Amaterasu was so curious that she took a look outside to find out what was going on. She was so fascinated by her own brilliant reflection in the mirror that she came out of the cave. Finally, the light covered and colored the world.

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Sites to Search for Science Facts about the SUN

Read about the sun to remind you of prior knowledge from science classes or to learn something new. Use these sites or search for others that provide the information you need.

- **SPACE FACTS** blog, <http://space-facts.com/the-sun/>
- **Space.com** article, "Earth's Sun: Facts About the Sun's Age, Size and History," <http://www.space.com/58-the-sun-formation-facts-and-characteristics.html>

Search these Sites for Sun Myths & Legends

Find a myth/legend/story that you find interesting; one you'd like to share with the class. Make sure to save the URL and information such as the title and culture so you can return to the site. Here are few sites to get you started. You may know others or search for another site that pinpoints a specific culture or solar event.


- **Windows to the Universe** opened in 1995. First supported by NASA, the site is currently owned and managed by the National Earth Science Teachers Association. It includes documents, images, movies, animations, data, and stories. The CULTURE section includes sub-sections of sun myths, stories, poetry, and art. Find it at <http://www.windows2universe.org/mythology/planets/sun.html>
- **Stanford Solar Center** site is an education and public outreach arm of the Solar Observatories Group, and is funded by NASA. The Solar Folklore section site includes folktales, myths, creation stories, and legends from many ancient cultures. <http://solar-center.stanford.edu/>
- **Native Languages of the Americas** is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the indigenous languages of the Western Hemisphere. The website provides a library of available online materials about the more than 800 Amerindian languages and the people that speak them, including many sun legends and tales, <http://www.native-languages.org/legends-sun.htm>
- **National Geographic**, Solar Eclipse Myths from Around the World. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/11/131101-solar-eclipse-myth-legend-space-science/>
- **Fiery Folklore: 5 Dazzling Sun Myths** at *Live Science* – Science Newsletter. Myths from around the world to explain the solar eclipse. <http://www.livescience.com/23028-fiery-folklore-5-dazzling-sun-myths.html>



FIVE SUN FACTS & A STORY

Use resources provided by your teacher or conduct your own research to complete these tasks.
Remember to include your sources for each.

FIVE SCIENTIFIC FACTS ABOUT THE SUN

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1. _____

 2. _____

 3. _____

 4. _____

 5. _____

Citation – where did you find this information?

SUMMARY OF A SUN MYTH

Citation – where did you find this myth?

Name(s) _____ Date _____