THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

Read the text and fill in the gaps.

Yellow gaps are word-formation exercises and pink gaps are one word gaps.

The Marriage of Figaro, Italian Le nozze di Figaro, comic opera in four acts by Austrian _____(compose) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Italian libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte), _____ premiered in Vienna at the Burgtheater on May 1, 1786. Based _____ Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais's 1784 play *Le Mariage de Figaro*, Mozart's work remains a favourite in the operatic repertoire.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

In 1782, as Mozart was making his way as a composer in Vienna, Count Orsini-Rosenberg, director of the Burgtheater (the imperial theatre), invited him _____ write an opera buffa. The young composer was in favour at the court of Emperor Joseph II, but he had stiff competition in _____ (establish) local composers, including Antonio Salieri, Vicente Martín y Soler, and Giovanni Paisiello. Mozart was hoping for greater fame and _____ (finance) security, and in his _____ (choose) of material he was influenced _____ the unprecedented success in Vienna of Paisiello's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (1783), which was based on Beaumarchais's earlier play *Le Barbier de Séville* (1775; *The Barber of Seville*). That work would later also become the basis of Italian composer Gioachino Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* (1816). Beaumarchais's sequel had _____ translated into German. Performances of the play were planned in Vienna, but the emperor refused _____ (permit) to stage the work, allowing only its publication. (Joseph had heard from his sister Marie Antoinette about the troubles the play had caused in Paris.) Da Ponte, _____ of the poets of the imperial court, removed political content and _____ (faith) translated the rest into Italian—the appropriate language for the opera buffa that Mozart intended to compose.

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The emperor allowed the project to go forward without _____ (object). With Mozart's masterpiece of a score, the result was a witty yet profound tale of love, betrayal, and forgiveness.

The Marriage of Figaro was in some ways an instant success. Its bubbling overture, its _____ (brilliance) crafted arias—which give insights into the personalities of the characters who sing them—and its lively _____ intricate ensemble scenes won the hearts of nearly all who witnessed it. Encores became so _____ (number) that after the work's third performance the emperor declared that, to keep the evening to a reasonable _____ (long), only numbers written for a single voice could be repeated in any opera. (As it turned out, this edict may not have been enforced.)

Partisans of Mozart's rivals did their best to spoil the early performances. Orsini-Rosenberg had favoured another librettist over Da Ponte, and he was not inclined to make the production go _____ (smooth). Late in the summer, one local reviewer remarked upon "the unruly mob in the gallery" that was still determined to disrupt the performances with noise. Yet, the journalist added, the opera "contains so many beauties, and such a richness of thought as can proceed only from the born genius."

The opera _____ performed only nine times during 1786 in Vienna, perhaps because Martín y Soler's *Una cosa rara* (also set to a libretto by Da Ponte) came on the scene and essentially pushed the Mozart work aside. The *Marriage of Figaro* made _____ more durable impression in its next performances, in Prague later in 1786. In January 1787 Mozart and an entourage including his family travelled to Prague by _____ (invite) to attend the opera and spend time with local music lovers and patrons; he conducted at _____ one performance himself. Encouraged by the opera's favourable reception, the theatre's director asked Mozart to write something new specifically for Prague. That work would be the opera *Don Giovanni*.

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