MUSIC HISTORY LESSON DIRECTIONS: Read the passage below. Then, answer the questions on the back side of this page as completely as you can.

The Baroque Period (1600–1750 C.E.)

ABOUT THE BAROQUE PERIOD . . .

Baroque painting, architecture, music, literature, and fashion were fancy and highly embellished. Opera stars sang arias filled with trills and ornaments. Buildings adorned with arches and domes were filled with elaborately carved ceilings and elegant chairs painted white and gold. Paintings featured rich colors and voluptuous human figures. Men wore carefully curled white wigs and coats trimmed with lace. Women had long dresses with intricate designs, pleats, and buttons. The splendor largely influenced by the wealth and splendor of kingdoms in Europe.

BAROQUE MUSIC

Music of the Baroque Period was primarily composed and performed for three cultural institutions: the Church, the opera house, and the courts of the nobility. During the Baroque Era, the Church was the primary outlet for serious music in Europe. Church music (sacred music) was written primarily for organ, voice, or a combination of the two. The use of other instruments in the church grew throughout the Baroque Period, beginning with the brass music of Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, and continuing with the inclusion of strings and winds in cantatas and oratorios (music dramas based on religious subjects). The Gabrieli’s music was particularly unique because it was antiphonal (an-TI-fo-nal), meaning that they placed different groups of brass instruments in various parts of the church to create an unusual musical experience.

Opera combined elaborate sets and costumes with musical performances by virtuosos—extremely skilled singers and instrumentalists. The dramatic productions of the opera had their origins in the music dramas of the Church. Opera was attended by all classes of people from peasants to royalty. Important Baroque composers include Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frederic Handel, Arcangelo Corelli, Georg Philipp Telemann, and Antonio Vivaldi.

BAROQUE MUSICAL STYLE

Stylistically, music changed from the Renaissance to the Baroque Period in several ways. During the Baroque Period, the written melody, whether sung or performed instrumentally, was used primarily as a guideline for the performer, who was expected to improvise and ornament freely. Rapid scale passages, ornaments, and chord figuration in a free, fantasy-like style were written to display brilliant technique. One such place for these flourishes is in the cadenza, an unaccompanied passage before the end of a piece.

Contrasting texture within a piece of music became increasingly important and was achieved through concerto grosso (kohn-sair-TAH-toh) style. Concertato style required that large and small groups of instruments alternately play sections of the music in contrasting styles. Polyphonic music continued to develop during the Baroque Period. One of the most sophisticated polyphonic types of composition was the fugue, which featured imitative counterpoint in which a single theme is layered on top of itself in many different manners. Written dynamics were introduced into music for the first time during the 17th century, but they were used sparingly. The terms piano (soft) and forte (loud) came into general use in new Italian music, and similar markings were used in other European countries. By the 18th century, crescendo (gradually louder) and decrescendo (gradually softer) were marked using these symbols: \[<\] and \[>\].

Johann Sebastian Bach (shown here in a portrait by Elias Gottlob Haussmann in 1746) made wide use of the fugue, as illustrated in such works as The Well-Tempered Clavier and The Art of Fugue.
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1. Place these historical events into the correct place on the timeline by inserting a vertical line and corresponding letter.
   a. Pilgrims sail to America (1606)
   b. British scientist Isaac Newton measures the moon’s orbit (1666)
   c. First newspaper is printed in America (1704)
   d. Danish explorer Vitus Bering discovers Alaska (1741)

2. What do music, art, and architecture of the Baroque Period have in common?

3. What type of music combined drama, scenery, costumes, and virtuoso music skills?

4. Baroque composers expected their melodies to be performed exactly as written.
   □ True □ False

5. Fill in the letter of the description that best matches each word or phrase.
   ______ music of the Baroque Period was composed primarily for these
   \quad a. music performed by different brass groups placed in various locations of the church
   \quad b. polyphonic composition which featured imitative counterpoint where a melodic theme is layered on top of itself
   \quad c. the Church, the opera house, and the courts of the nobility
   \quad d. unaccompanied passage played before the end of a piece
   \quad e. large and small groups of instruments play sections of the music in contrasting styles
   ______ fugue
   ______ cadenza
   ______ antiphonal music
   ______ concertato style

6. Name at least two composers from the Baroque Period.