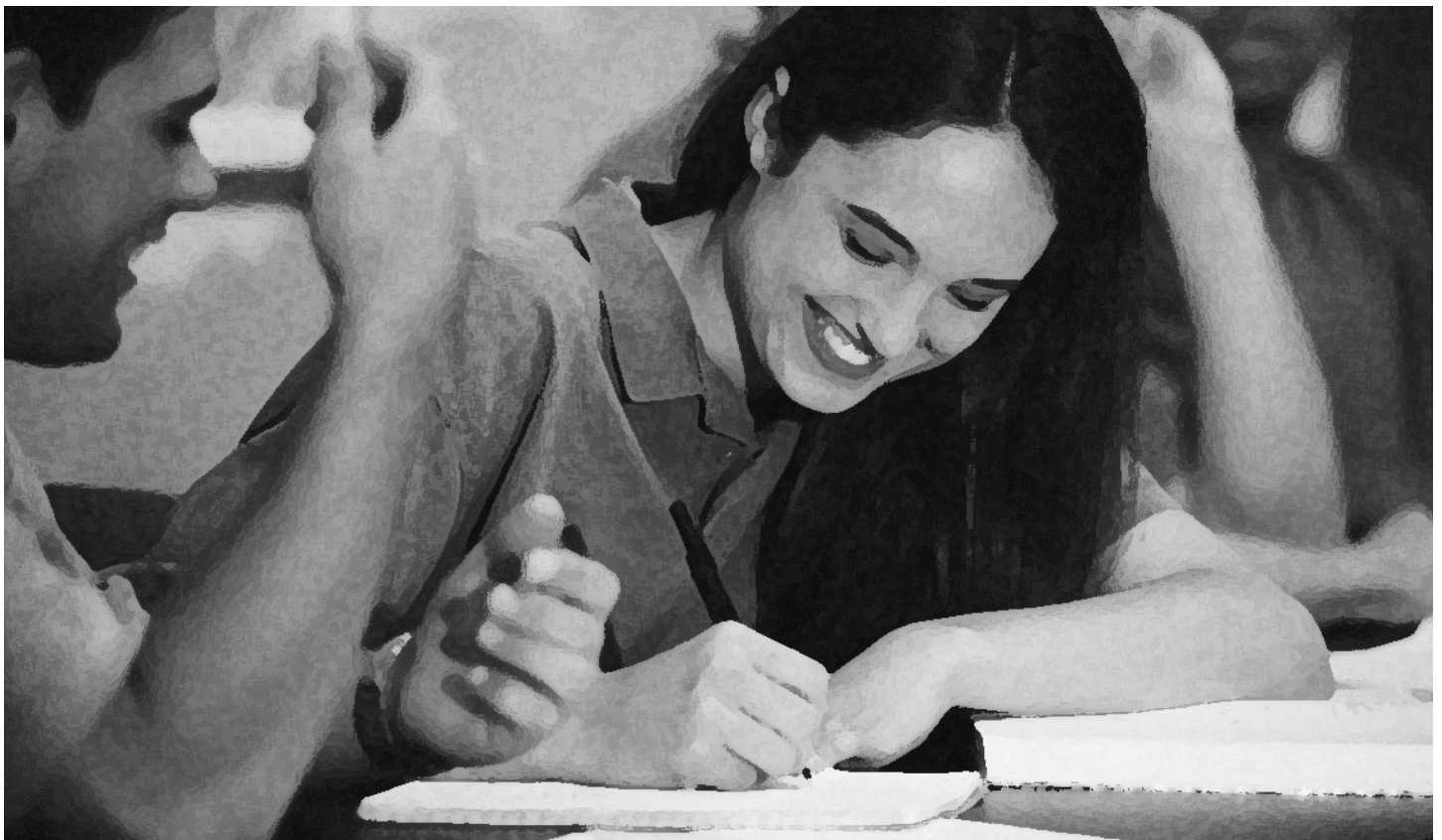


PRESTWICK HOUSE

# Activity Pack

## CYRANO DE BERGERAC

BY EDMOND ROSTAND



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Written by Katie Mitchell

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pre-Reading****Group Research Assignment**

**Objective:** Understanding the historical context of *Cyrano de Bergerac* by researching 17<sup>th</sup> century French theater

**Activity**

*Cyrano de Bergerac* is a unique play in that it contains scenes that take place in a theater. Additionally, theater in France was quite different during Rostand's time, when *Cyrano de Bergerac* was performed, and Cyrano's time, the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This activity gives you the opportunity to explore theater in the 1600's by researching theaters mentioned in the play.

During this activity, you will work in a small group to conduct research on one of the following theaters in France. Use the Internet or other school resources to find out what the theater was like, when it was established, and what its status is now. Find or draw pictures of the theater to include on a poster to share with your classmates.

Your choices of topics are:

- the Hôtel de Bourgogne
- the Théâtre du Marais
- the Petit-Bourbon
- the Palais-Royal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**During Reading****Act Titles**

**Objective:** Identifying the main idea of each act and titling the act appropriately

**Activity**

As you read the play, choose a title for each act. Each time you read an act, record on the chart what you believe is the main idea(s) of that act. Then, come up with a title that reflects the main idea. The first one has been done for you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Act I****Advice Column****Objective:** Identifying conflict in the play**Activity**

Write a letter and a response to an advice columnist like “Dear Abby.”

In Act I, the conflict is crystal clear: Cyrano and Christian both love Roxane, and neither feels worthy of her. Christian feels he is too stupid and boring for her; Cyrano feels he is too ugly. Pretend to be either Christian or Cyrano and write a letter to “Dear Abby” asking for advice on how to proceed. What do you think Cyrano or Christian should do next? How should either of them try to win Roxane’s love? After writing your letter, write Abby’s response to your letter—what advice do you think she would give you?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Act I****Deciphering Allusions****Objective:** Understanding the use of allusions in the play**Activity**

Research allusions that appear in Act I.

An allusion is a reference to a person, place, or event not actually in the book; it is designed to imply a comparison. For example, if a character is compared to Hercules, it would imply that he is strong. However, if the reader is unfamiliar with the allusion, the comparison is useless. By understanding allusions, readers can better understand the author's original intent and message.

*Cyrano de Bergerac* is full of allusions. With a classmate or two, use the Internet, encyclopedia, or other resources available at your school to look up the allusions in Act I. Complete the chart provided by defining the allusion and then writing why you think Rostand chose that allusion. The first one is done for you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Act II****Use Your Allusions****Objective:** Applying allusions in poetry**Activity**

In Act II, Rostand alludes to three Greek heroes or characters: Apollo, the god of light, music, and poetry; the Bacchantes, who were frenzied female worshippers driven mad by the god of wine, Dionysus; and Orpheus, an ancient poet and musician who was murdered by the Bacchantes.

In this activity, you will choose a Greek god or goddess from the list below. Use the Internet and library resources to complete the chart about the god or goddess you chose.

Gods and goddesses:

- Aphrodite
- Apollo
- Ares
- Artemis
- Athena
- Demeter
- Hades
- Hephaestus
- Hera
- Hercules
- Hermes
- Hestia
- Medusa
- Pan
- Pandora
- Pegasus
- Persephone
- Poseidon
- Zeus

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Act II****Imitating Style****Objective:** Imitating Cyrano's poetic skill and style**Activity**

Write a poem to introduce your classmates using Cyrano's style.

By now you know that Cyrano has many talents, including a quick wit and sharp tongue. He can break out the cruelest insult, the cleverest poem, or the most romantic sentiment in an instant. In Act II, Cyrano introduces his company to de Guiche by means of a poem. For this activity, you will write a similar poem to introduce your classmates to your teacher.

Your poem must include the following:

- A name for your classmates that you repeat throughout the poem, like "the Bold Cadets of Gascony"
- At least two nicknames (Cyrano uses "Stab-Your-Belly" and "Slit-Your-Trunk")
- At least three similes or metaphors (like Cyrano's "eagled-eyed," "graceful as cats," and "wolf-like grin")

Your poem should be at least 16 lines long (Cyrano's is 32). Be prepared to share your poem with the class.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Act III****Analyzing Poetry**

**Objectives:** Recognizing similarities between the play and selected poems

**Activity**

Identify connections between *Cyrano de Bergerac* and various poems.

Poets such as Robert Frost and William Shakespeare spent much of their careers writing about love. In this activity, you will read several poems; then you will complete the analysis chart by writing a few sentences connecting each poem to a part in the play. Does the poem remind you of a particular part in the play? Does the poem recall an emotion or trait of one of the characters? Be sure to express your ideas in complete sentences.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Act III****Characterization****Objective:** Identifying character traits**Activity**

Create a “WANTED” or “LOST” poster for a character.

Using what you know about each character from the play, choose one character and create either a “WANTED” poster or a “LOST” poster. For a “WANTED” poster, include the character’s name, the traits for which he is known, the action(s) for which he is wanted, where he was last seen, and reward information. For a “LOST” poster, include the character’s name, the traits for which he is known, where he was last seen, who is looking for him, and reward information.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Act IV****Diving Deeper into Allusions****Objective:** Applying allusions in the play**Activity**

In Act IV, Rostand alludes to the French philosopher Rene Descartes. Known as the Father of Modern Philosophy, Descartes coined the phrase, "I think, therefore I am." In the play, Cyrano begins to read from Descartes after the men complain of severe hunger. Perhaps his motive in reading the men Descartes is to teach them that whatever they think or believe will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the men think about being hungry, then they will be hungry.

What about other philosophers? Many of the world's most influential thinkers were from France. In this activity, you will work in groups to research one of the French philosophers from the following list. Fill in the chart provided as you research, and in the final box, write whether the philosophy you researched could apply to the plot, characters, or motifs of the play. Be sure to explain how it does or does not apply.

When you finish, be prepared to share your research with the class.

Philosophers:

- Albert Camus
- Auguste Comte
- Michel Foucault
- Jean-Paul Sartre