

Tomie dePaola's  
**Strega Nona**  
THE MUSICAL



**Applause Series CURRICULUM GUIDE**  
**CIVIC CENTER OF GREATER DES MOINES**

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January 14, 2010

Tomie dePaola's  
**Strega Nona**  
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## Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *Tomie dePaola's Strega Nona: the Musical*. For more than 35 years, Strega Nona's story has charmed children, parents, and teachers, and we are thrilled to bring her magic to the stage with a delightful production from Maximum Entertainment. We are very pleased that you have chosen to share this special experience with your students and hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your in-classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable.

In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a wide variety of discussion questions and activities that tie into several curriculum areas. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to "pick and choose" material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class's unique needs.

See you at the theater,

Civic Center Education Team

**Support for Civic Center education programs and the Applause Series is provided by:**

Alliant Energy, American Republic Insurance Company, Bank of the West, Bradford and Sally Austin, Bank of America, EMC Insurance Companies, Jules and Judy Gray, Greater Des Moines Community Foundation, Hy-Vee, John Deere Des Moines Operations, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, Richard and Deborah McConnell, Pioneer Hi-Bred - a DuPont business, Polk County, Prairie Meadows Community Betterment Grant, Sargent Family Foundation, U.S. Bank, Wells Fargo & Co., Willis Auto Campus, and more than 200 individual donors.

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This study guide was compiled and written by Karoline Myers; edited by Michelle McDonald and Eric Olmscheid. Partially adapted from study guide materials from Maximum Entertainment, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, and Wild Swan Theater.

# ABOUT THE CIVIC CENTER



The Civic Center of Greater Des Moines is a cultural landmark of central Iowa and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities. The Civic Center has achieved a national reputation for excellence as a performing arts center and belongs to several national organizations, including The Broadway League, the Independent Presenters Network, International Performing Arts for Youth, and Theater for Young Audiences/USA.

Five performing arts series currently comprise the season— the Willis Broadway Series, Prairie Meadows Temple Theater Series, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield Family Series, the Dance Series, and the Applause Series. The Civic Center is also the performance home for the Des Moines Symphony and Stage West.

The Civic Center is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. Through its education programs, the Civic Center strives to engage patrons in arts experiences that extend beyond the stage. Master classes bring professional and local artists together to share their art form and craft, while pre-performance lectures and post-performance Q&A sessions with company members offer ticket holders the opportunity to explore each show as a living, evolving piece of art.

Through the Applause Series— curriculum-connected performances for school audiences— students are encouraged to discover the rich, diverse world of performing arts. During the 2010-2011 season, the Civic Center will welcome more than 30,000 students and educators to 12 professional productions for young audiences.

**Want an inside look? Request a tour.**

Group tours can be arranged for performance and non-performance dates for groups grades 3 and above.

Call 515-246-2355 or visit [civiccenter.org/education](http://civiccenter.org/education) to check on availability or book your visit.

## DID YOU KNOW?

More than 250,000 patrons visit the Civic Center each year.

The Civic Center opened in 1979.

The Civic Center has three theater spaces:

- *Main Hall, 2745 seats*
- *Stoner Studio, 200 seats*
- *Temple Theater, 299 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)*

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Main Hall.

Nollen Plaza, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a park and amphitheater that is also part of the Civic Center complex. The space features the Brenton Waterfall and Reflection Pool and the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for the 15th anniversary season!



# GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



## YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Lively bands, musicians, and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
- What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

## THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the Civic Center:

- Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- Turn off cell phones, pagers, and all other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound, so the other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage—they will let you know what is appropriate.
- Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

\*GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

# CIVIC CENTER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



**Thank you for choosing the Applause Series at the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines. Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Civic Center.**

## ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. **Payment (or a purchase order) for your reservation is due four weeks** prior to the date of the performance.
- The Civic Center reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Civic Center, and be seated in the theater.
- Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

## DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

- Directions: From I-235, take Exit 8A (Downtown Exits) and the ramp toward 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Turn onto 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and head south.
- Police officers are stationed at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Locust Streets and will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the Civic Center. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking in ramps or metered (non-hooded) spots downtown.
- Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show. At the conclusion, bus drivers must be available to move their bus if necessary, even if their students are staying at the Civic Center to eat lunch or take a tour.
- Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the Civic Center. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with the Civic Center Education staff.

## ARRIVAL TO THE CIVIC CENTER

- When arriving at the Civic Center, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes. You may enter the building through the East or West lobbies; a Civic Center staff member may be stationed outside the building to direct you.
- Civic Center staff will usher groups into the building as quickly as possible. Once inside, you will be directed to the check-in area.
- Seating in the theater is general admission. Ushers will escort groups to their seats; various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may determine a group's specific location in the hall.
- We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and other adults position themselves throughout the group**; we request this arrangement for supervision purposes, especially in the event that a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging seat locations and taking groups to the restroom.

## IN THE THEATER

- In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher. A medical assistant is on duty for all Main Hall performances.
- We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- Following the performance groups may exit the theater and proceed to their bus(es).
- If an item is lost at the Civic Center, please see an usher or contact us after the performance at 515.246.2355.

### QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department at 515.246.2355 or [education@civiccenter.org](mailto:education@civiccenter.org). Thank you!

# ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



This delightful new musical from Maximum Entertainment and Bay Area Children's Theatre combines three of Tomie dePaola's books about the character Strega Nona.

The story is told using music, dance, and puppetry and features a cast of seven talented actors. The imaginative set was inspired by the pop-up book version of the book *Brava Strega Nona* by Tomie dePaola.

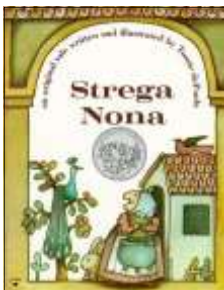
## SYNOPSIS

Strega Nona, a "grandma witch," uses potions, cures, and other magic to help her neighbors in the small Italian town of Calabria. Although Strega Nona enjoys helping her neighbors, she comes to realize that she doesn't have as much energy as she once did and that she could use some extra help. Therefore, she hires Big Anthony to help with her household chores. Strega Nona carefully explains the tasks that Big Anthony must complete and warns him that he must never mess around with her magic.

Of Strega Nona's magical gifts, Big Anthony is most impressed by her magic pasta pot. When Strega Nona leaves town to visit a friend, Big Anthony decides to try to impress the townspeople by treating them to a pasta feast using Strega Nona's magic pasta pot. Big Anthony gets the pasta going all right, but when it comes time to make it stop, he can't remember the trick. Before long, a huge wave of pasta threatens to engulf the entire town! Will Strega Nona return in time to save the day? Will Big Anthony learn his lesson? And what will happen to all of that pasta?

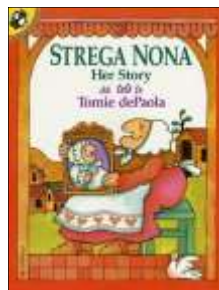
## PAGE TO STAGE CONNECTIONS

There are 10 stories by Tomie dePaola that feature Strega Nona. Three of the books, shown below, form the basis for *Strega Nona: the Musical*. Read the stories with your class prior to seeing the performance.



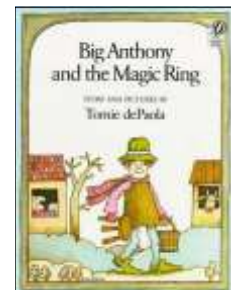
### STREGA NONA

*Trouble ensues when Strega Nona leaves Big Anthony alone with her magic pasta pot.*



### STREGA NONA: HER STORY

*When Grandma Concetta retires, she leaves Nona her magic pasta pot.*

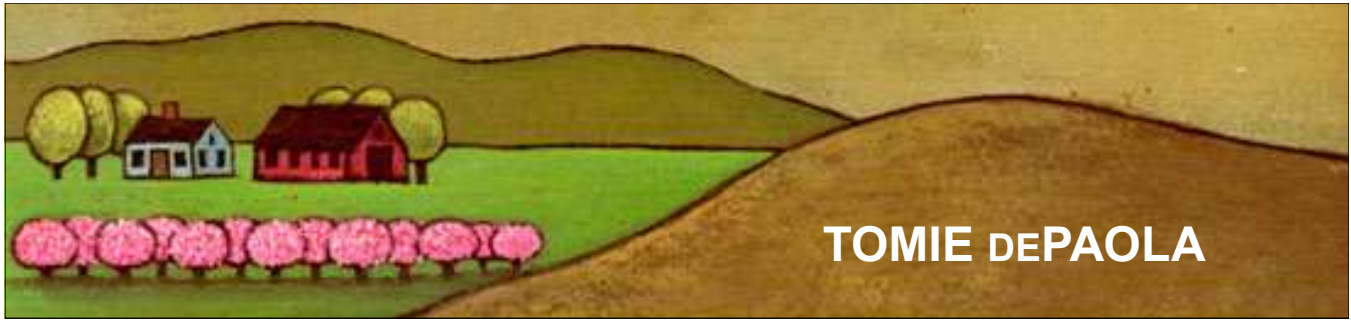


### BIG ANTHONY AND THE MAGIC RING

*Big Anthony borrows Strega Nona's magic ring to turn himself into a handsome man.*



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR



Tomie dePaola (pronounced **da-Pow-la**) is a true leader in the field of children's literature. He is the author of more than 100 books and the illustrator of more than 200, including *26 FAIRMOUNT AVENUE*, *STREGA NONA*, and *MEET THE BARKERS*. He has been described as a "creative visionary" (Boston Globe) and is recognized for the energy and empathy expressed in his art and lively storytelling.

## CHILDHOOD

Tomie dePaola was born on September 15, 1934 in Meriden, Connecticut. He grew up there with his father and mother, Joseph and Florence (Downey) dePaola, and his brother and sisters, Joseph, Judie and Maureen.

Tomie's mother loved books and read to him every day. As a result, Tomie developed a love for books at a very early age. At the age of four, Tomie told anyone who would listen that he wanted to write stories and draw pictures for books. His family was very supportive of his dream. They continued to read to him every day. They also provided him with his very own workspace in the attic and plenty of art materials to use for his illustrations. Many of the books that young Tomie created were for his younger sisters.

## ART SCHOOL

When Tomie graduated from high school, he went to Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. In art school, he said he "spent four years learning how to draw everything - tin cans, dogs, cats, horses, trees - and I practiced and practiced."

## STYLE

Tomie dePaola's signature illustrations have a gentle quality. With bright colors and simplified composition, his style is often reminiscent of folk art. He most frequently uses colored inks and watercolors on handmade watercolor paper for his books, but he also uses pencil drawings, etchings, charcoal drawings and other techniques. Critics have noted that his pictures frequently resemble stage sets, most likely due to the fact that dePaola has always had a strong interest in theater.

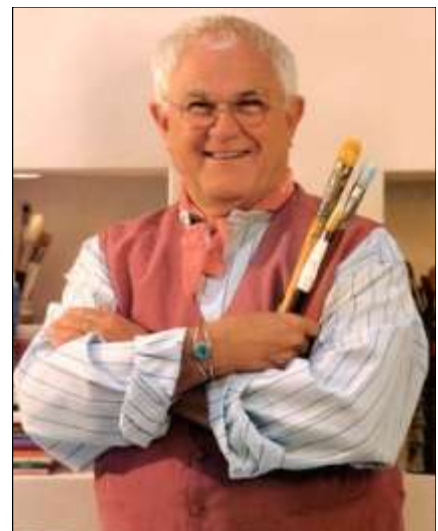
Tomie dePaola knew he wanted to be an artist by the time he was four years old. "I must have been a stubborn child," he once said, "because I never swayed from that decision."

ABOVE: An illustration by Tomie dePaola of his home region of New England. Image courtesy of [www.tomie.com](http://www.tomie.com)

## TODAY

Tomie dePaola has now been published for 45 years. More than 6 million copies of his books have sold worldwide, and his books have been published in over 15 different countries. His work has been recognized with the Caldecott Honor Award, the Newbery Honor Award and the New Hampshire Governor's Arts Award of Living Treasure.

He lives in New London, New Hampshire with his Airedale dog, Brontë.



Tomie dePaola with his paint brushes. Image courtesy of [tomie.com](http://tomie.com)

# THE CREATION OF STREGA NONA



Photo: Joshua Posamentier

It is widely believed that Strega Nona is a character from Italian folklore. In fact, the character is an invention from the imagination of author/illustrator Tomie dePaola.

## In the words of Tomie dePaola...

In the early 1970s, I was teaching in the theater department at what is now Colby-Sawyer College in New Hampshire (where I live). My books were beginning to get noticed, so my editor at Prentice-Hall (now Simon & Schuster), Ellen Roberts, suggested that I look into re-telling a folk tale. Of course, I would also illustrate it.

Well, some months before at a required weekly college faculty meeting (I always sat in the back row with a legal pad and doodled. The administration thought I was taking notes.), I was, as usual, doodling. I was “obsessed” with the Italian commedia dell’arte character Punchinello. So many of my doodles were of him – big nose, big chin.

On my pad, I drew the profile, but suddenly I found I had drawn a head scarf. I put in the eye and the smiling mouth and continued to draw a little chubby body complete with long skirt and apron. And I scribbled the words “Strega Nona” next to the drawing.

I was tickled pink. She was so cute, so Italian. I thought I might be able to use her in a book someday. I pinned the doodle up on my studio wall.

Back to Ellen Roberts and her suggestion that I re-tell a folk tale.

“What was one of your favorite folk tales when you were a child?” she asked.

“The Porridge Pot story,” I answered immediately. So, I re-read the story. But, I didn’t really like it. Suddenly, **LIGHT BULB TIME!**

Maybe I could change **PORRIDGE to PASTA** and I could use my little Strega Nona (who was already “telling” me who she was). So, I started working on the text for **STREGA NONA**.



Strega Nona, as drawn by Tomie dePaola. At the top of the page is a photo of an actor playing Strega Nona in *Strega Nona: the Musical*. How are the characters the same? How are they different?



Doodles by Tomie dePaola showing the similarities between his Strega Nona and the Punchinello character. Do you like to doodle?

Strega is Italian for witch. Nona is a slang spelling for granny in Calabria, a region in southern Italy that was home to Tomie dePaola’s ancestors and the setting of the Strega Nona stories.

Images courtesy of tomie.com



# THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE MUSICAL



Photo: Joshua Posamentier

There are many jobs in the theater. From the people who develop the show to the performers you see on stage, it takes a lot of effort and teamwork to bring a story to the stage.

Help your students think about the many jobs in the theater by reviewing the following information about the team behind *Strega Nona: the Musical*.

The **Author** is Tomie dePaola. Some musicals and plays are inspired by books. Tomie dePaola's books about the character Strega Nona were adapted for the stage production that you will see.

The **Stage Adaptation** is by Thomas W. Olson. He took the stories from Tomie dePaola's books and wrote a new script to bring the stories to life on stage.

The **Director** is Tracy Ward. The director is in charge of telling the actors where to go on stage and how to make their characters interesting. She is the person who makes sure everyone is doing a good job telling the story of the play.

The **Actors** are all of the people who you see on the stage. They work together as a team to rehearse the play, memorize their lines, and learn their songs. All of the actors went to school to learn how to perform.

The **Set Designer** is Andrea Bechert. The set designer creates the world where the actors tell the story. She imagines and draws all of the pieces that you saw on the stage, the furniture, and the painted fabric.

The **Costume Designer** is Ulises Alcalá. The costume designer imagines the clothes that the actors wear to help them become the characters. He draws and then sews the clothing.

The **Composer** is Aron Accurso. The composer writes all of the music for the show. This includes the songs that the actors sing as well as the instrumental music that sets the tone for each scene.

The **Producer** is Maximum Entertainment. The producers hire all of the people involved with the show. They also work together to tell people all across the country about the show so that people will want to come and watch it.

## Discussion Questions for Before the Show

1. What is theatre? What is the difference between live theatre and a movie or television?
2. Imagine you are an actor on stage. What kind of part would you like to play?
3. How would you like the audience to respond to your performance?
4. Why do we applaud at the end of a performance?



Photo: Joshua Posamentier

Big Anthony sings a song. What do you notice about his costume and the set behind him?

'The People Behind the Musical' adapted from "Study Guide for Tomie dePaola's Strega Nona: a Musical" by Maximum Entertainment

# LEARN ABOUT ITALY

*Strega Nona: the Musical* and the *Strega Nona* books are set in the country of Italy. Strega Nona and her neighbors live in a region called Calabria. Learn more about Strega Nona's home before you see the show.

## THE COUNTRY: ITALY

**Location:** Italy is a country in southern Europe. It is a boot-shaped peninsula that is surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea. Italy is bordered by the countries of Monaco, France, Switzerland, Austria, and Slovenia.

**Capital:** Rome is the capital city of Italy.

**Size:** Italy covers 116,306 miles, including the islands of Sicily and Sardinia.

**Population:** Approximately 58,133,500 people live in Italy (as of 2009)

**Flag:** Italy's flag is made of three equal-sized rectangles of red, white and green. The green rectangle hangs by the flagpole.

**Climate:** Italy mostly has a mild, Mediterranean climate. The far north is cold and mountainous; the south is rugged, hot and dry.

**Language:** Italian is spoken in Italy.

## SPEAK LIKE AN ITALIAN

These are some common Italian words that are used in the play. Practice saying them aloud so that you will be able to listen for them during the performance.



## THE REGION: CALABRIA

Calabria (pronounced kuh-ley-bree-uh) is located at the southernmost tip (the toes of the "boot") of Italy. The Calabrian territory is mountainous and hilly. For centuries, the rugged terrain kept Calabria isolated from much of the rest of Italy as travel was difficult. Many small villages were centered around life that knew only of the area customs and history.

Much of Calabria today is unchanged from ancient times. Women still balance terra cotta jars of water on their heads. Old men play cards in the main squares of villages. Delicious fish, vegetables, cheese, sausage, salami, wild mushrooms and figs make up the foods of the region.

*ciao!* – hello or goodbye  
*buon giorno*- good day  
*un momento!* – just a minute!  
*si*- yes  
*grazie* – thank you  
*basta!* – enough!  
*bene!* – good!  
*piccolo* - little

*ragazzo* – boy  
*scusi* – excuse me  
*prego* – you are welcome  
*presto* – fast  
*tutti* – all  
*delizioso* – delicious  
*Signor* - Mr.  
*Signora* – Mrs.

# PASTA FUN FACTS



Photo: Joshua Posamentier

When Big Anthony plays with Strega Nona's magic pasta pot, pasta takes over the entire town of Calabria. Check out these fun facts about pasta prior to seeing the show.

## History

The Chinese are on record as having eaten pasta as early as 5,000 B.C.

Many people believe that the explorer Marco Polo discovered pasta in China and introduced it to his countrymen in Italy. This is incorrect. Evidence suggests that Italians began making pasta prior to when Marco Polo returned from China.

The Spanish explorer Cortez brought tomatoes back to Europe from Mexico in 1519. Almost 200 years passed before spaghetti with tomato sauce made its way into Italian kitchens.

Thomas Jefferson is credited with introducing macaroni to the United States. He fell in love with the dish when he tried it in Naples, Italy. He immediately ordered crates of macaroni and a pasta-making machine to be sent back to the United States.

## Ingredients

Most pasta is made using wheat products mixed with water. Other types of pasta are made using ingredients such as rice, barley, corn, and beans.

## Nutrition

Pasta is a good source of carbohydrates. It also contains protein. Carbohydrates help fuel your body by providing energy that is released slowly over time.

## Varieties

Pasta comes in many different colors. Most pasta is cream-colored, but some is made using spinach making it green. Red pasta is made using tomato.

There are more than 600 pasta shapes produced worldwide.

## By the Numbers

To cook one billion pounds of pasta, you would need 2,021,452,000 gallons of water. That is enough to fill nearly 75,000 Olympic-size swimming pools.

The average person in Italy eats more than 51 pounds of pasta every year. The average person in North America eats about 15 pounds of pasta every year.

## NOT JUST SPAGHETTI!

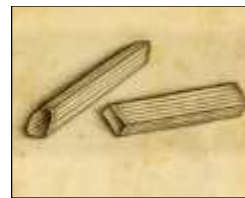
Take a look at a few of the many fun pasta shapes. Do they look like the meaning of their names?



**Farfalle**  
("Butterflies")



**Cavatappi**  
("Corkscrew")



**Manicotti**  
("Small Muffs")



**Orecchiette**  
("Little Ears")



**Rotelle**  
("Little Wheels")



# VOCABULARY



Photo: Joshua Posamentier

## THEATER



Photo: Joshua Posamentier

**actor:** a person who performs on stage and acts out the story. There are 7 actors who perform in *Strega Nona: the Musical*. You will see each of them on stage.

An actor plays the baker's daughter in *Strega Nona: the Musical*.

**adapt:** to adjust or change material, such as a story in a book, to be presented in another way, such as a play. Tomie dePaola's book *Strega Nona* was adapted to be a musical.

**costumes:** the clothing worn by actors that helps them look like their character

**musical:** a play that contains songs performed by the actors and musicians

**set:** scenery and objects on stage that show where the story takes place

**stage:** the platform on which actors perform. Audience members sit in seats facing the stage and watch the performance.

## TOMIE DEPAOLA

**author:** a person who writes a story. Tomie dePaola is the author of more than 100 books.

**doodle:** to draw or scribble. Tomie dePaola created *Strega Nona* while he was doodling.



A doodle by dePaola.

**folk tale:** a traditional story that a people passes on. Many people believe *Strega Nona* is an Italian folk tale; however, Tomie dePaola re-told a different folk tale called *The Porridge Pot* to create *Strega Nona's* story.

**illustrator:** an artist who creates pictures to accompany a story. Tomie dePaola has illustrated more than 200 books.

**watercolors:** paint made of pigments that dissolve in water and create different colors. Tomie dePaola often uses watercolors in his illustrations.



A palette where an artist is mixing watercolors with water. The amount of water mixed with the paint determines how bright or dark a color is.

## STREGA NONA

**cure:** a remedy to heal or restore health. *Strega Nona* offers magic cures to her neighbors to help them.

**nona:** a slang word in Italian that means "granny"

**potion:** a drink with magical powers

**strega:** Italian word that means "witch"

## ITALY

**pasta:** a popular Italian food that is most often made from wheat flour and water. Pasta comes in many different shapes.

**peninsula:** an area of land that is almost completely surrounded by water but still connected to the mainland. Italy is a peninsula.



Northern Italy is connected to Europe. Its other sides are surrounded by water.

## ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION: Literacy & Drama Connections– pg. 1 of 2



### WRITE YOUR OWN STREGA NONA STORY

**Goal:** To write a creative story that includes plot elements of situation, conflict and resolution

**When:** Before or after the seeing the performance

**Explanation:** Big Anthony gets into a lot of trouble when he uses Strega Nona's magic pasta pot. In this activity, students will write an original story about other kinds of trouble Big Anthony gets into.

**Activity:**

1. Review the plot and characters in *Strega Nona* with your students.
2. Ask students to brainstorm other magical objects that Strega Nona might have (a love potion, a magic bucket that fills with water, a magic feather that makes the person holding it fly, etc.)
3. Ask students to imagine what might happen if Big Anthony used another magical object. Have them think about situation, conflict and resolution.
4. Using the basic plot format, have students write a story called *Big Anthony Strikes Again*. You could write this story as a whole group activity, in small groups, or individually.

**Story starter questions:**

- What does the magic object do?
- What makes the magic object work?
- How does Big Anthony find out about this object?
- Why does Big Anthony want to use it?
- What happens when Big Anthony uses the object?
- How does Strega Nona find out?
- How does Strega Nona resolve the problem?
- What consequence does Big Anthony face?

Story activity adapted from Wild Swan Theater's study guide for *Strega Nona and the Magic Pasta Pot*.  
Image courtesy of tomie.com

### WRITE A LETTER TO THE ACTORS

**Goal:** To reflect on the performance experience and practice writing skills

**When:** After seeing the performance

**Explanation:** After seeing the show, students will write letters to the actors.

**Activity:**

1. After attending the performance, discuss the experience with your students. Use the following discussion questions to guide the conversation:
  - What was the play about?
  - Were there differences between the story in the book and the story in the play?
  - What parts of the play were most exciting?
  - Which character did you enjoy the most? Why?
  - Which parts of the set helped to tell the story? How?
2. Next, invite students to write a letter to the actors.

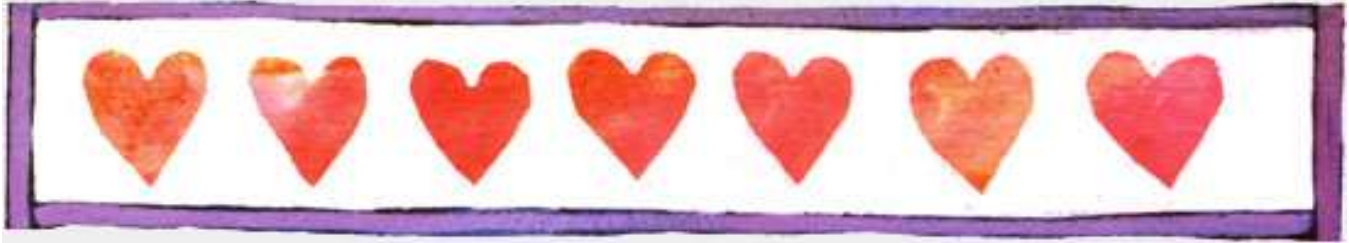
Dear Strega Nona Actors,

My favorite part of the play was...  
While watching your play I felt ... because ...  
I have drawn a picture of the scene when...  
If I could be in your play, I would like to play the part of ...because ...

Sincerely,

3. After writing the letter, students can illustrate a scene from the play.
4. The actors love hearing from their audiences! If you would like, send the letters to Active Arts Theatre for Young Audiences, 6114 La Salle Avenue, #431, Oakland, CA 94611. Make sure to include your return address— your class may receive a note back from the actors!

## ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION: Literacy & Drama Connections– pg. 2 of 2



### DRAMA: ACTING OUT A STORY

**Goal:** To use drama to convey the elements of character, setting, and plot in a story

**When:** After seeing the performance

**Explanation:** In the play *Strega Nona: the Musical*, the actors took a story which was originally a book and acted it out. In this activity, students will explore the elements of character, setting, and plot using a Tomie dePaola book and use those elements to present the story through tableaux.

**Tableaux:** a dramatic convention in which individuals use their bodies to create a “frozen picture” that expresses actions, locations, feelings or situations.

#### Activity:

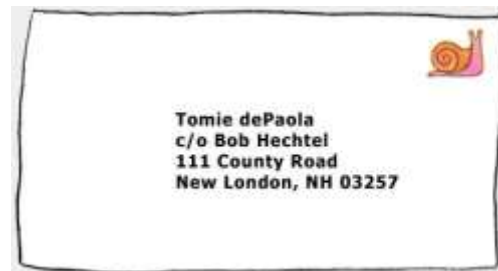
1. Select a story by Tomie dePaola and read it aloud to the class.
2. As a class, brainstorm the characters in the story and the different settings (locations) in the story.
3. As a class, determine the plot (events in order with a clear beginning middle and end).
4. Break up the story into small segments and assign each segment to a group of students.
5. Students must then create a tableaux (frozen picture that tells a story) of their assigned moment in the story. Together, students may represent the characters, objects, or setting of their assigned moment.
6. All groups then present their tableaux in front of the class in the order of the story.
7. Once a group is “frozen,” tap students on the shoulder one at a time. When a student has been tapped, they should “unfreeze” and share a sentence or two that describes who they are and what they are doing in the scene.

#### Follow-up Questions:

1. How would you describe the character you played? What in the story led you to that conclusion?
2. How was the story affected by the place it occurred? Would the story have been different if it took place on the beach? In outer space? How?
3. What happened at the beginning of the story? In the middle? At the end?
4. How did you feel when you were depicting your tableaux for the class?
5. What did you notice about the tableaux created by your classmates? Did the tableaux help you understand the story in a different way? How?

#### Additional Follow-Up Activity: Write to Tomie dePaola

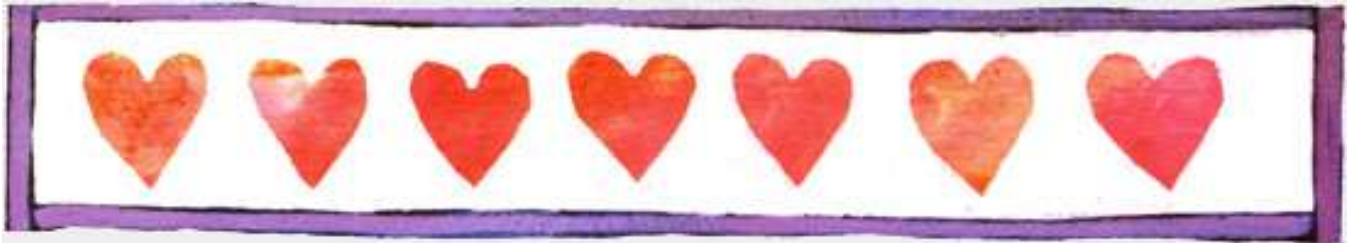
Tomie dePaola receives nearly 100,000 fan letters each year. You and your students can write to him to at:



Tableaux activity adapted from “Study Guide for Tomie dePaola’s *Strega Nona: a Musical*” by Maximum Entertainment  
Images courtesy of tomie.com



# ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION: Math Connections– pg. 1 of 1



## COUNTING KISSES

**Goal:** To practice counting (or addition and subtraction) skills

**When:** Either before or after seeing the performance

**Explanation:** Based on the story of *Strega Nona*, students will count kisses to stop their magic pasta pots.

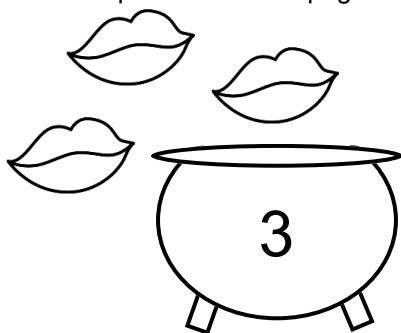
**Activity:**

1. Create a set of magic pasta pots and lips (representing kisses) out of construction paper using the template found on page 21.
2. Write a number on each pasta pot.\*
3. Place the pasta pots and lips in one of your centers.
4. Remind students that Strega Nona's magic pasta pot only stops if you blow three kisses. Tell them that these magic pasta pots require a different number of kisses to make them stop.
5. Instruct students to place the correct number of lips on each magic pasta pot to get the pot to stop.  
For example: students counts out 7 lip cutouts for a pot labeled with the number 7.

\*For older students, you may want to modify to the activity to include addition and subtraction facts. For example, students place 5 lip cutouts on a pot labeled  $3+2$ .

**EXAMPLE:**

(full-size templates found on page 21)



## ESTIMATING WITH PASTA

**Goal:** To practice estimation and counting skills

**When:** Either before or after seeing the performance

**Explanation:** When Big Anthony uses the magic pasta pot, the pasta overflows and fills the whole town. In this activity, students will estimate how much pasta Big Anthony made.

**Activity:**

1. Fill a jar with dry pasta (spirals tend to work well for this activity).
2. In groups, allow your students to estimate how many pieces of pasta are in the jar. Remind them to make their best educated guess.
3. Write down the estimates.
4. Pour the pasta from the jar into paper cups and pass out the paper cups so that each student receives a cup. Give each student an additional, empty paper cup.
5. Instruct students to count their cup of pasta by moving the pasta from one cup to the other and counting it piece by piece.
6. Have students write their results on the board.
7. Add up the results to see the total and which group's estimate was the closest.
8. Ask students to imagine the central square in the town of Calabria. Ask them to imagine how many jars of pasta it would take to fill the central square. Tell students that 1,000 jars fit in the central square.
9. Through multiplication, figure out how much pasta Big Anthony accidentally made.

**Follow-up Discussion Questions:**

1. How did you come up with your estimate for how many pieces of pasta were in the jar? Did some techniques come closer than others?
2. As punishment for using Strega Nona's magic pasta pot, Big Anthony had to eat all of the pasta. How do you think he felt trying to eat that much pasta?

Estimation activity adapted from "Study Guide for Tomie dePaola's *Strega Nona: a Musical*" by Maximum Entertainment  
Image courtesy of tomie.com

## ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION: Science & Dance Connections– pg. 1 of 1



### PASTA SORTING

**Goal:** To sort pieces of pasta by different attributes

**When:** Before seeing the performance

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will sort pasta by shape, color or other attributes.

**Activity:**

1. Gather as many different types of dry pasta as you can and mix them together.
2. Invite students to sort the pasta by shape.
3. If you have any multi-colored pasta, have students sort the pasta by color.
4. Finally, have students come up with their own categories to sort by: size, texture, holes or no holes, etc.

---

### CREATE A PASTA DANCE

**Goal:** To practice observation skills and explore different types of movement

**When:** Before seeing the performance

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will examine different types of pasta and explore movement choices inspired by the pasta shapes. After describing the movements, students will create a movement sequence and perform it for the class in groups.

**Activity:**

1. Gather as many different shapes of dry pasta as you can. Clear desks and tables to create a wide open space.
2. Show students the different shapes of pasta one at a time. Ask students to mimic each shape using a part of their body or their entire body with a nearby partner. Then ask them to explore different ways they can make those body shapes move. Have them describe the movement with a word.

### Create a Pasta Dance, cont.

3. Encourage students to try movements they can perform while staying close to their “home” spot, such as bending, twisting, shaking, wiggling, spinning and jumping.
4. Next, give students the freedom to try other movements that take them away from their “home” spot, such as bouncing, sliding, skipping, hopping, flying, fluttering, and leaping. Remind students of the need to watch out for others.
5. As students move in their pasta shapes, encourage them to try different directions (forward, side steps, backwards, diagonal, zigzag) and different levels (up high, close to the ground, in between).
6. Next, divide the students into groups to create a pasta dance sequence. Have each group pick a different pasta shape and agree upon four movements for their shape.
7. Ask students to move across the floor doing each movement in a sequence of four. (Ex. Spin, spin, spin, spin; slide, slide, slide, slide; wiggle, wiggle, wiggle, wiggle; twist, twist, twist, twist.)
8. If available, play some lively traditional dance or folk music such as a tarantella and have the groups take turns crossing the floor to create a pasta dance parade.

**Follow-up Discussion Questions:**

1. What did you notice about the different pasta shapes?
2. What choices did you make when coming up with your movements?
3. Did you try any movements that you did not keep when it was time to create your dance?
4. Was it important to try lots of different types of movement? Why?
5. How do you think the actors will make it look like the pasta is moving in *Strega Nona: the Musical*?

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'Pasta Dance' activity adapted from *Strega Nona* Teacher's Resource Guide from New Jersey Performing Arts Center. Image courtesy of tomie.com

# ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION: Character Connections– pg. 1 of 2



## CHORES AND RESPONSIBILITY

**Goal:** To explore the idea of responsibility and the cause-and-effect consequences of our actions

**When:** Before seeing the performance

**Explanation:** Big Anthony has to do chores for Strega Nona. In this activity, students will discuss chores and responsibilities and draw cause and effect connections relating to their actions.

### Activity:

1. Ask what chores and responsibilities some of the students may have to do in their homes such as picking up toys, doing homework, taking out the garbage, or brushing their teeth.
2. Write the chores they list on the board.
3. Discuss what would happen if they did not do their job. Encourage students to consider practical as well as personal consequences.
4. Have each student pick one of the chores listed.
5. Ask students to think about the effect of completing the chore and the effect of not doing the chore.
6. Provide each student with a sheet of drawing paper. Instruct them to draw a line dividing the paper in half vertically and another line dividing the paper in half horizontally. They should now have 4 equal-sized boxes on their paper.
7. In the top two boxes, students will draw a set of cause-and-effect pictures illustrating what happens when they do not do their chore. Under the drawings, have students label the first picture 'cause' and the second picture 'effect,' followed by a sentence describing what is happening in the picture.

*Example:*

Cause: I played basketball instead of picking up my toys.

Effect: My sister accidentally stepped on my toy robot and broke it.

8. In the bottom 2 boxes, students will draw another set of cause-and-effect pictures illustrating what happens when they are responsible and complete their chore. Again, have students label the first picture 'cause' and the second picture 'effect,' followed by a sentence describing what is happening in the picture.

*Example:*

Cause: I picked up my toys.

Effect: I have more room to play with my racecars.

9. Have students share their pictures with one another. Display them in your classroom.

### Follow-up Discussion Questions:

1. Why do we have to do chores?
2. Have you ever helped someone with their chores? Has anyone ever helped you? How did that make you feel?
3. How are your chores different from the chores your parents or older siblings do? How are they the same? Will the chores you do change as you grow older? Why?
3. What does it mean to be responsible?

### Additional Follow-up Questions for After the Show:

1. What types of chores was Big Anthony supposed to do for Strega Nona? Did he do them well?
2. What chores did Bambolona have to do every day to keep the bakery running?
3. How did Bambolona feel about doing all of the bakery chores by herself? What did her father do to help Bambolona? Did it make Bambolona feel better?

(Activity cont.)

Image courtesy of tomie.com



## ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION: Character Connections– pg. 2 of 2



### HELPING HANDS

**Goal:** To explore how we demonstrate caring by helping one another

**When:** Before seeing the performance

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will discuss ways that we demonstrate caring for one another at home, school, and in the community. They will end by writing a thank you note to someone who helps them.

**Activity:**

1. Read the book *Strega Nona* as a class. Tell students to pay attention to examples of people helping one another or asking for help.
2. After you finish reading, record examples of helping that students noticed on the board or on a large sheet of paper.
3. Discuss with students that one of the ways that we show caring for one another is by helping.
4. Create 3 large charts at the front of the room. Label each chart with a heading: home, school, community.
5. As a class, brainstorm who helps us in each place and how. Add student ideas to the appropriate charts.
6. Invite students to write a thank you note to someone who helps them or others. The person they write to can be someone they know (a parent or sibling at home, a friend or teacher at school) or someone they may not know personally (firefighters at the local fire station).
7. Provide students with art materials to decorate their thank you note.

**Follow-up Discussion Questions:**

1. How do we know that people care for us?
2. How do you feel when you help someone?
3. *Strega Nona* helped others, but she also asked for help. When is it okay to ask for help?
4. Do you have to wait for someone to ask before you offer to help them?

### WELCOME, BIG ANTHONY

**Goal:** To understand what it is like to be new and to think about simple ways to welcome a new person

**When:** After seeing the performance

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will imagine that Big Anthony is moving to their town and write him a special note welcoming him to his new home.

**Activity:**

1. Lead a short discussion about how Big Anthony was new to Calabria. Ask students about how Big Anthony felt and the different things he did to try to get the townspeople to like him. Did Big Anthony feel welcome in Calabria? Why or why not?
2. Invite students to imagine that they have moved to a new place. How would they feel? What types of things would make them feel welcome?
3. Explain to students that it can be frightening or lonely to be in a new place, but there are things that others can do to make us feel welcome.
4. Next, tell students that Big Anthony is moving to their town! Invite students to write a special welcome note to Big Anthony. Students may write their own original notes or use the letter below as an outline.

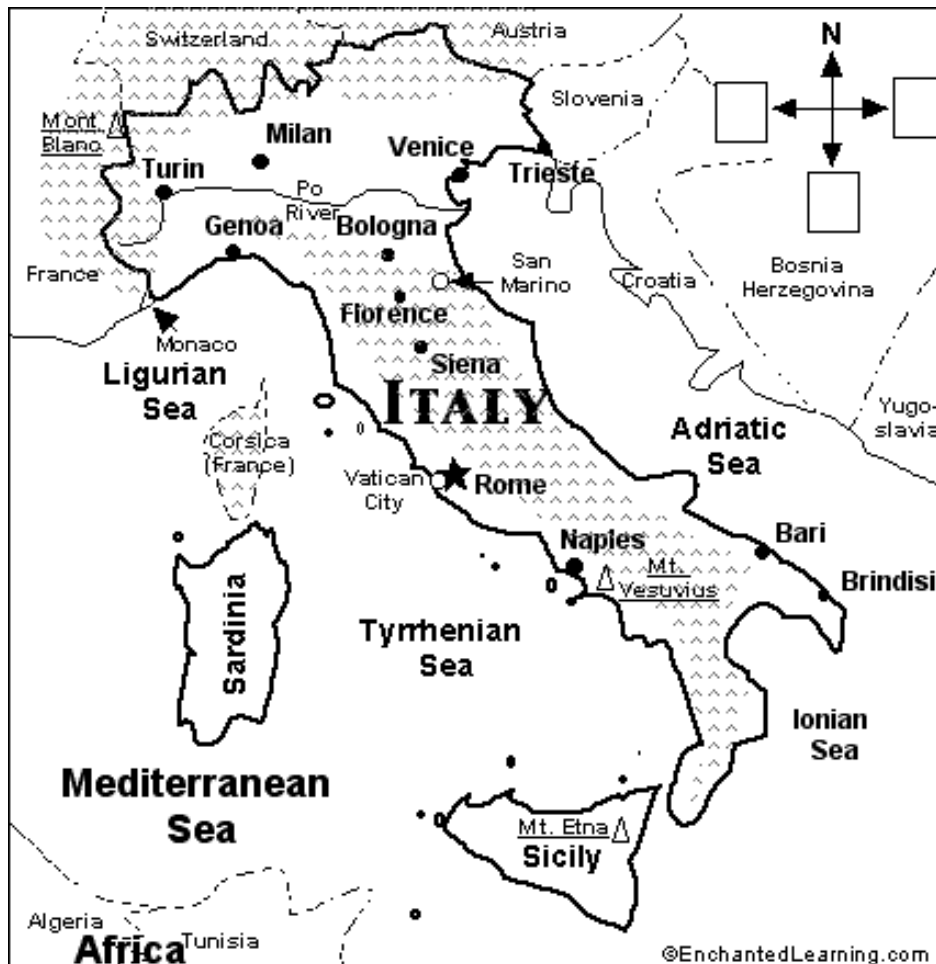
Welcome to [town name], Big Anthony!  
Being new can feel ....  
To welcome you to [town name], I would like to spend the day with you.  
On our day together we will visit ....  
I will show you ....  
I will introduce you to ....  
I will share...  
Your new friend,

**Follow-up Discussion Questions:**

1. Have you ever been new to a place? If so, how did you feel?
2. What sort of things can we do to welcome someone new?
3. Do we have to try to change who we are to get people to like us? (Think about Big Anthony.)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## LEARN ABOUT ITALY– GEOGRAPHY WORKSHEET



Use the directions to color the map.

1. The region of Calabria is located at the toe of Italy. Color the toe of Italy green.
2. Color the rest of Italy purple. Don't forget the islands of Sardinia and Sicily.
3. Color the Mediterranean Sea and the smaller seas surrounding Italy blue.
4. Color all of Europe (except Italy) yellow.
5. Color Africa red.
6. Fill in the rest of the directions in the compass rosette.

Answer the following questions:

1. What item of clothing is Italy shaped like?
2. What is the capital of Italy?
3. Which countries border Italy?
4. Italy is a peninsula. What is a peninsula?

ANSWER KEY located on page 21. Map activity adapted from and graphic courtesy of enchantedlearning.com.





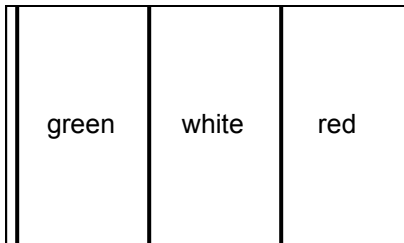
# TEACHER ACTIVITY KEY AND TEMPLATES

## LEARN ABOUT ITALY: GEOGRAPHY WORKSHEET, pg. 19

1. What item of clothing is Italy shaped like?  
A boot
2. What is the capital of Italy?  
Rome
3. Which countries border Italy?  
Monaco, France, Switzerland,  
Austria, and Slovenia
4. Italy is a peninsula. What is a peninsula?  
An area of land that is almost  
completely surrounded by water but  
still connected to the mainland

## LEARN ABOUT ITALY: CULTURE WORKSHEET, pg. 20

### ITALIAN FLAG ACTIVITY



### TRUE OR FALSE ACTIVITY

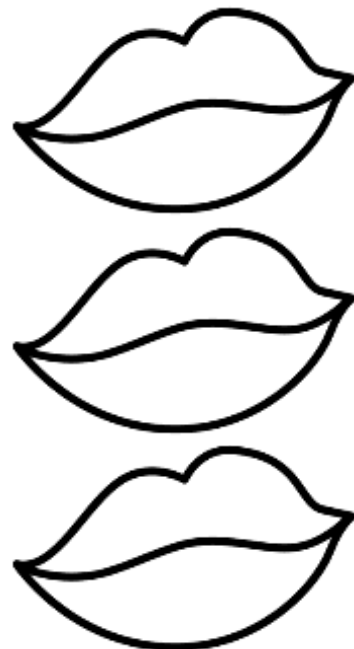
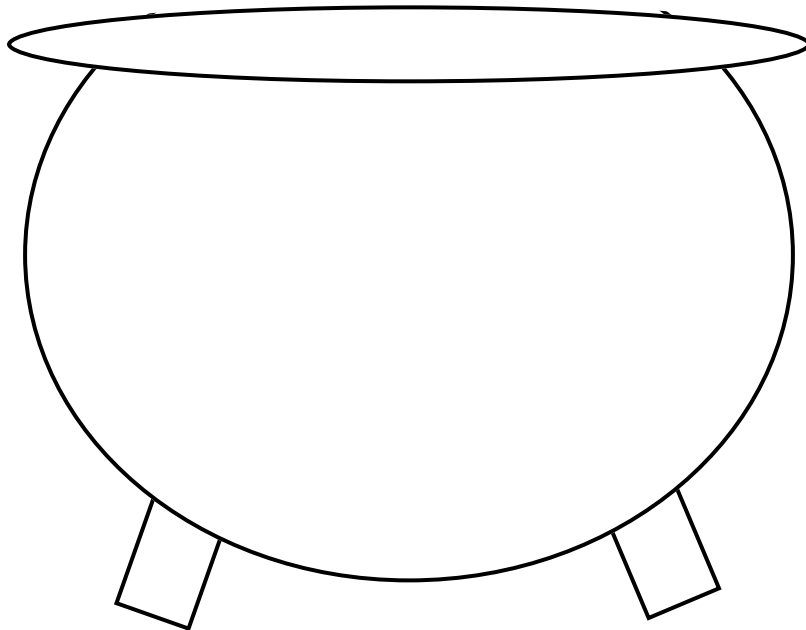
1. False
2. True
3. False

### LANGUAGE MATCHING ACTIVITY

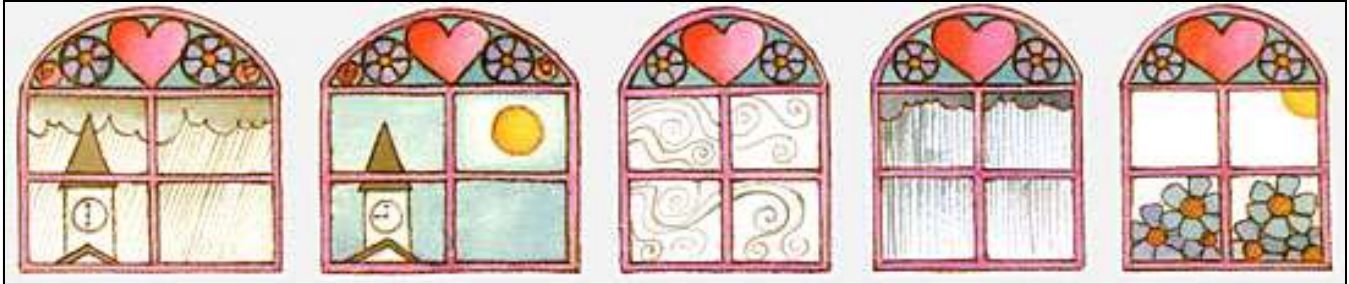
Draw a line from the Italian word to the English word.

Ciao	Excuse me
Si	Delicious
Un Momento	Yes
Grazie	Hello or goodbye
Basta	A little
Scusi	One moment
Delizioso	Good
Prego	Thank you
Piccolo	Enough
Bene	You're welcome

## COUNTING KISSES ACTIVITY TEMPLATE, pg. 15



# RESOURCES AND SOURCES



## STREGA NONA BOOKS BY TOMIE DEPAOLA

*Strega Nona*, 1975

*Strega Nona's Magic  
Lessons*, 1982

*Merry Christmas, Strega  
Nona*, 1986

*Strega Nona Meets Her  
Match*, 1993

*Strega Nona: Her Story*,  
1996

*Strega Nona Classic Board  
Book*, 1997

*Big Anthony: His Story*,  
1998

*Strega Nona Takes a  
Vacation*, 2000

*Brava Strega Nona Pop-up  
Book*, 2008

*Strega Nona's Harvest*,  
2009

## CLASSROOM RESOURCES

### Books

DePaola, Tomie. *The Art Lesson*. New York: Putnam: 1989.  
*An autobiographical picture book about young Tomie's quest to be an artist.*

Ellemen, Barbara. *Tomie dePaola: His Art & His Stories* by Barbara Elleman. New York: Putnam, 1999.

### Websites

Tomie dePaola's official website: <http://www.tomie.com>  
*Provides biographical information, list of accomplishments, calendar, pictures and other information about Tomie dePaola*

## STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

Enchanted Learning- Italy:  
<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/europe/italy/>

National Pasta Association: <http://www.ilovepasta.org>

Press Kit for *Tomie dePaola's Strega Nona: the Musical* from the Brad Simon Organization:  
[http://www.bsoinc.com/family/streganona/streganona\\_presskit.pdf](http://www.bsoinc.com/family/streganona/streganona_presskit.pdf)

*Strega Nona* Teacher's Resource Guide from New Jersey Performing Arts Center:  
<http://www.njpac.org/joomla/education/schooltime-performances/62>

Study Guide for *Tomie dePaola's Strega Nona A Musical* from Maximum Entertainment in Association with Active Arts Theatre for Young Audiences.

Study Guide for *Strega Nona and the Magic Pasta Pot* from Wild Swan Theater:  
<http://old.wildswantheater.org/documents/StregaNonastudyguide.pdf>

Tomie dePaola's official website: <http://www.tomie.com>

Image courtesy of tomie.com