

Strega Nona Lesson Plan
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South Carolina State Standards:

ELA Standards

- ❖ (K-3)-1 The student will read and comprehend a variety of literary texts in print and non-print formats.
- ❖ (K-1)-3 The student will read by applying appropriate skills and strategies.
- ❖ (K-3)-5 The student will write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Theatre Standards

- ❖ (K-3)-1 The student will create improvised scenes and written scripts based on personal experience, culture and heritage, imagination, literature, history, and current events.

(See Indicators that are based on specific grade levels).

Essential Question: How can I demonstrate the thoughts, feelings, and/or actions of the characters in the story of Strega Nona?

Objectives:

TSW

- ❖ Describe and analyze what the story characters are thinking and feeling as they play out their roles in the story.
- ❖ Analyze and compare the art in the story to determine plot and setting.
- ❖ Determine understanding by acting out characters using character masks and tableaux.
- ❖ Assess understanding by creating a poem in which the student becomes a character in the story and shows the characters thoughts and feelings throughout the story.

Materials:

- ❖ Six copies of the original Strega Nona, including Instructor's copy(these can be found from the local library system).
- ❖ Sticky notes for the class.
- ❖ Poetry instructions for teacher, along with a copy of the last page of the book, and the Instructor's poetry example.

Activating Strategy:

- ❖ Ask the following questions to the students:
 - *Raise your hand if you have ever been so curious about how something worked that you would do anything to figure it out? (Call on a few students to share).*
 - *What happened when you were too curious? Did anything big happen?*
 - *Did you face any consequences because you were too curious? (Accept responses).*

- ❖ *Say: I am going to share a story with you about someone who had a lot of curiosity, and it got him into a lot of trouble.*

Establishing the setting:

- ❖ This story is based on an old folk tale.
- ❖ This story happens in Calabria, Italy.
- ❖ Italian words are used in the story, like *Grazie*, which means “thank-you”, and *Si*, which means, “yes.”
- ❖ This story happened a long time ago in a far away place, so the clothing, buildings, etc. will look very different from where we live.

Before reading the book:

Character Analysis-Small Group Discussion

- ❖ Divide classroom into five groups. This can be done using cooperation challenges (ex: *by the time I count to 5, you are in a group of 4 people*). Groups will need their pencils.
- ❖ Hand out copies of *Strega Nona* to each group (if desired, cover words in the book so that students don’t read through the story). Hand out sticky notes to each group.
- ❖ Preview the illustrations to analyze the setting, characters, and events. There are two main characters: *Strega Nona* and *Big Anthony*.
- ❖ With your small group, begin going through the book, looking at the pictures, but not reading the words.
- ❖ Discuss the following questions as you go through the book:
 - *What do you notice is happening in the book?*
 - *What begins to change in the pictures to show that something major is happening in the story?*
 - *Look at the facial expressions of these two characters. How do they change throughout the story?*
- ❖ Use sticky notes to write down (or draw for younger children) what you think these characters are saying, thinking, feeling, or wondering.

Reflect-Whole Group Discussion

- ❖ *Say, “I heard many of your discussions and noticed that you _____ (fill in the blank with observations from the small group discussions).*
- ❖ Facilitate a short discussion based on questions such as:
 - *Why do so many of you believe that *Strega Nona/Big Anthony*_____? What did you see in the art that makes you think that?*
 - *What are you really curious to know about *Strega Nona* or *Big Anthony*?*
 - *Did someone in your group write down something really interesting about what he/she thought *Strega Nona* or *Big Anthony* was saying, thinking, feeling, or wondering?*
 - *What questions do you really hope to have answered as we read the book?*

While Reading the Book:

Character Masks-Step into Strega Nona's or Big Anthony's Shoes

- ❖ End of Page 2-(Where Strega Nona is curing people and making potions). *Strega Nona has the special ability to help a lot of people with her magic touch. Reach into your pocket and pull out your imaginary character mask. Shake it out. By the time I count to three, you will put your mask on to show what a person's face from the village looked like after Strega Nona helped them. 1-2-3. (Students freeze with their imaginary masks on.)* Tap a few people on their shoulders and ask them how they are feeling. *By the time I count to three, take the mask off, fold it up nicely and put it back into your pocket so we can use it again later.*
- ❖ End of page 9- (When Big Anthony sees that his chance has come). *By the time I count to three, you will put your mask on again and show how Big Anthony felt when he knew that Strega Nona was going to leave him by himself to care for her house and farm. 1-2-3.* React to a few students, and then have a few of them say a line of dialogue as Big Anthony to describe what he is thinking or feeling. *By the time I count to three, your mask will be off. 1-2-3. Now, what do you think will happen next?*
- ❖ End of page 26 and 27. (Where Strega Nona gives Anthony the fork). *Strega Nona didn't seem worried about the mistake that Anthony had done with the pasta pot. In fact, she knew exactly how to solve the problem, and teach Big Anthony a lesson. By the time I count to three, put your mask on and show me how Strega Nona felt towards Big Anthony for his mistake. (React and provide feedback). By the time I count to three, you will have the mask off. Great! What do you think will happen next? By the time I count to three, I will see your mask on and you will be showing me how you think Big Anthony's face will look like on the next page. 1-2-3. (React and then read the next page).*

After Reading the Book: Deepen Understanding

Small Group Discussion and Tableau

- ❖ Return to small group that you worked with earlier. Discuss the following questions:
 - *How was the story different from your original predictions?*
 - *Which of your previous questions were answered?*
 - *What are you still wondering?*
 - *What movies or other books does this story remind you of? Why?*
 - *Why do you think Tomie dePaola wrote this book? What was his purpose?*
- ❖ *I am going to reread some of the pages of this book (pg. 26-27-Reread the pages). You have one minute to talk with your group about what lesson Strega Nona was trying to teach Big Anthony. (Wait for students to discuss). Take one minute now to show that with your bodies by creating a tableau. Have students share if there is time.*
- ❖ *Now you have one minute to discuss what you would have done to Big Anthony if you were Strega Nona and you wanted to teach him a lesson. (Wait for students to discuss). Now take one minute to create a tableau that shows what*

you would have done if you were Strega Nona trying to teach Big Anthony a lesson, but instead of being silent, I want you to add dialogue to your tableau. Make sure your dialogue shows that you are playing out a particular character. (Respond and give feedback).

After Reading the Book: Synthesize (Assess) Understanding

Write a Poem Synthesizing the Art and the Story

- ❖ Using the very last page of the book that does not contain any words, write a poem that expresses the feelings of either Big Anthony or Strega Nona in this picture, based on what you know happened in this story. The poem does not need to rhyme and can use single words on a line, or phrases on a line. (Show teacher example and have students decide which character this perspective comes from):

- *Sad*
I did not listen
Pasta overflowing
Surrounding and chasing me
When will it stop?
I forgot three kisses
Now I must eat my full
I paid for my crime
And now my tummy's Big
Just like my name

If there is no time, instruct classroom teacher how to use this assessment on his/her own. Provide a copy of poem instructions, picture, and poem example to the teacher.