

Strega Nona Takes a Vacation

by Tomie dePaola

A whimsical story filled with Italian words and classical illustrations saturated with bright colors beautifully expresses Strega Nona's dreams of faraway places and of simpler times.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *What would you collect on your vacation to bring back home?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder who is in the boat?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *Strega Nona Takes a Vacation*

- seashore: land lying next to the sea
- village: a rural community, a smaller town
- remedy: a treatment for a disease
- spells: words with supposed magical power
- unusual: remarkable or out of the ordinary
- opposite: totally different from something
- flooded: water covering previously dry land
- sailing: traveling in a vessel with sails
- dove: a small bird, white, like a pigeon

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- What was Strega Nona dreaming about? Who was in her dream?
- What sorts of things did Strega Nona help the villagers with?
- What did Strega Nona's dream mean?
- Who were Big Anthony and Bambolona?
- What rules did Strega Nona leave when she left on her vacation?
- Where did Strega Nona go on her vacation?
- Describe what Strega Nona did on her vacation.
- Strega Nona sent Big Anthony and Bambolona gifts. What were they?
- Why did Bambolona switch the two gifts? What did she give Big Anthony instead?
- Can you remember what happened to the bubble bath?
- How did Strega Nona find out about the bubbles? How did that make her feel?
- The next time Strega Nona goes on vacation, what will she do with Big Anthony and Bambolona?



Do

Language - Lingua

Before: on one side of an index card write/print all the Italian words found throughout the story. On the back of each index card, write the English form of the word.

After reading the story, ask the children if they noticed any words that sounded different to them or if they heard any new words. Talk about how throughout the world, people speak different languages and even though the word might sound different, they have similar meanings to our English words. Next, show one of the index cards (English first) and have the kids tell you what it means. Then flip the card over and teach them how to say it in Italian. For example, "dream" and "un sogna." Have the children practice saying both the English word and the Italian translation. Repeat with all the index cards.

Strega Nona Word List

Dream – un sogna

Come – vieni

Heaven – cielo

Vacation – una vacanza

I'll go – andro

Goodbye – arrivederci

A kiss – un bacio

Presents – regali

Not again! – non ancora!

Very clean – molto pulito

I'm sorry – mi dispiace

Oh yes! - certo

If desired, on a map or globe, show the children where Italy is located and talk about some of the traditions/cultural characteristics specific to Italy.