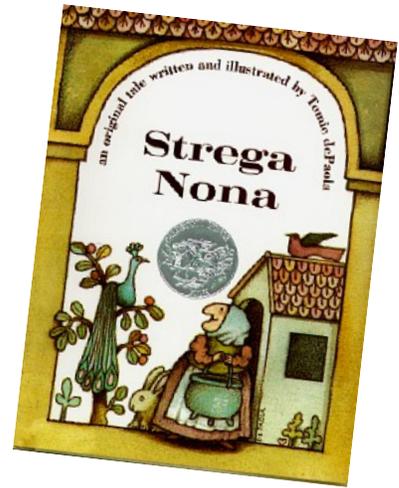


# Meaningful Math Connections Through Literature

By Oklahoma Teachers in Owasso

## Strega Nona By Tomie dePaola

This book has a magical grandma that we all love. She has an amazing pot that cooks pasta all by itself! Who doesn't love pasta?! One day Big Anthony sees Strega Nona make her magic pasta and tries to replicate the magic, even after Strega Nona gave him strict orders not to touch the pot. He didn't have all the information to use the magic correctly. He was missing the one thing that will make the pasta pot stop making pasta! The town's people are excited to have enough pasta for everyone, but without the magic kisses, the pasta pot wouldn't stop making pasta. Pasta filled the house, ran out the door, and started to fill the whole town! Thankfully Strega Nona arrives in time to stop the pasta from covering the entire town. Big Anthony learned his lesson about following instructions. Cleaning up the town leaves Big Anthony with a very full belly!



This isn't what we typically see as a "math book", which is why it is so fabulous to make connections to math in the real world for our students. There are several ways to take the themes in this book depending on your standards. One obvious concept is that Big Anthony needed all the information to do what he wanted successfully. When problem solving, students have to decide what is important information. What information and tools do they need to find a solution? This would work across all grade levels.

### ***Here are a few more ideas shared by teachers in Owasso:***

Present the class with in a few different types of pasta. Ask the students what they notice about the different pasta, such as the shapes and sizes. Ask them what they wonder about the pasta. Many will notice that some are larger than others, opening the door for **measurement** lessons. Spaghetti would be easy to measure, ziti too, but what about elbow macaroni? Maybe have some string handy. Doing **non-standard measurement**? Measure using meatballs!

If you are lucky enough to be or know a good chef, or have one as a daughter-in-law 😊, have them come in a measure out the ingredients to make the pasta from scratch... okay, maybe that is a bit much unless you love pasta as much as I do. What other food is as fun to make and eat. It is the one time as adults we get to "play" with our food.

Some will notice the **shapes**, opening the door for a chance to build some **patterns** with the different shapes or colors, if you bring colored pasta like the garden rigatoni.

How fun would an Italian theme, music, accent, and all, be for this!

Working on **estimation**: Ask and use strategies to find how many of the different types of pasta fill a bowl, or canister. Ready to introduce **volume**? What about comparing dried pasta with cooked pasta?

# Web Resources

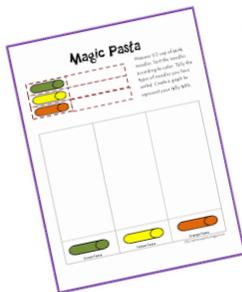
[http://www.tomie.com/books/spotlight\\_on\\_strega.html](http://www.tomie.com/books/spotlight_on_strega.html)

This website, while not about math, gives some great background on how Strega Nona was created and some of the ideas behind the book.



## On Top Of Spaghetti

*On top of spaghetti, all covered with cheese  
I lost my poor meatball, When somebody sneezed.  
It rolled off the table and onto the floor  
And then my poor meatball rolled out of the door.  
It rolled in the garden and under a bush  
And now my poor meatball is nothing but mush.  
So next time you eat spaghetti, All covered with cheese  
Protect your poor meatball, In case of a sneeze.*



## Stega Nona Writing and Graphing Activity

From Precious Perks

<http://preciousperks.blogspot.com/2011/08/stega-nona-writing-and-graphing.html>



## The Wise Owl Factory: Sequencing Activity

<http://www.wiseowlfactory.com/BookaDay/PDFs/2011/08/StregaNonacolorandworkpages.pdf>



Do you have a great resource to share with Oklahoma Teachers that goes along with this book? Consider sharing it with **#OKMath** group on Facebook or as a Twitter Tag.

