

## Fortune Cookie Poetry/Found Poems

ED 4352 – Poetry K-12 - Sexsmith

The following is an example you can try with your students involving Found Poetry. You may choose to follow either an individual or small group approach. The process is virtually the same.

### It's All About The Cookie!

For many centuries the Chinese have marked special occasions and festival times such as harvest and New Year with the giving and receiving of Moon Cakes these were made from Lotus Nut Paste. During the 13th and 14th centuries China was occupied by the Mongols. When plans were made in Peking for a popular uprising to oust the invaders, much thought was given how news of the date of the uprising could be circulated without alerting the Mongols. The story goes that the Mongols had no taste for Lotus Nut Paste and so the Chinese hid the message containing the date in the middle of their Moon Cakes replacing the yolk with secret messages. Patriotic revolutionary, Chu Yuan Chang took on the disguise of a Taoist priest and entered occupied walled cities handing out Moon Cakes. These were the instructions to co-ordinate the uprising which successfully formed the basis of the Ming Dynasty. Thus the tradition of giving cakes with messages was born and became a popular way of expressing wishes of goodwill or good fortune on an important occasion. The origins of the Fortune Cookie as we know it today were laid down by the Chinese 49ers who worked on the building of the great American railways through the Sierra Nevada into California. Work was very hard and pleasures were few in isolated camps, those hard workers had only biscuits with happy messages inside, to exchange at the Moon festival instead of traditional cakes with happy messages, thus the FORTUNE COOKIE was born.

1. Hand out a fortune to each student in the class. You can just do groups, however, the students love to have a cookie of their own! Get good cookies. Some have really senseless fortunes (Wong Wing) try to find the Far East Fortune Cookie Company.
2. Instruct students to open their cookies and read their fortunes.
3. Let groups select the most intriguing fortune of all.
4. As a group they must write a poem around the fortune. The only rule is that the fortune itself must be completely used exactly as it came from the cookie. In fact, I have my students actually tape it to the poem.
5. Read, eat, and enjoy!

### Teachers – Think Before Speaking

Sometimes we forget  
Just how harmful words can be  
Sarcastic cutting comments  
That we often fail to see.

Sticks and stones can break bones  
And words can be as cruel  
Thoughtless phrases – lack of praises  
Adding to the fuel.

*Words should be weighed and  
Not counted so they say  
The smallest must be measured  
Or the innocent might pay*

Weigh wisely your words  
Before your lips they do part  
At stake is a student who  
Listens first with their heart!