**Common Core Lesson Plan**

English Language Arts/U.S. History

“Fortune Cookies”

Created by: Tara Howlett

Liberty High School

Kern High School District

**Subject:** ELA/ U.S. History

**Unit Length:** 1 period

**Content:** Fortune Cookies

**Common Core State Standards**

**Reading 3-** Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text

**Writing 4-** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.

**Day One**

1. **Teacher passes out fortune cookies to every student.**
2. **Teacher instructs students to open and eat the cookie and read their fortune.**
3. **Ask students where they think fortune cookies originated from.**
4. **Have students discuss in small groups their answers and come up with a guess as to where they came from with their group, share with the class.**
5. **Pass out background handout (attached).**
6. **Have students read the title only. “The History of the Fortune Cookie: Born in California, of Chinese-American- or maybe Japanese American- origin.**
7. **Did any of the groups correctly guess the origin of California? What clues does the title give us about what is to come in article? Discuss with class.**
8. **Have read the article aloud as a class (first read).**
9. **Have students read the article independently to annotate the text (second read).**
10. **Ask students to discuss in small groups what representation do fortune cookies have on American’s perceptions of Asian cultures? Are they accurate, misrepresented, or partial? What does this say about American views about Chinese and Japanese Americans during these time periods (Late 1800s- WWII)?**

**Writing Prompts**

**ELA- Using a “fortune” prompt have students write a story inspired by one of the following prompts**

**The best path for you is the hardest one**

**Don’t hold onto your gift**

**Someone you least expect will help you**

**A big surprise awaits you**

**U.S.- Based of the historical information you read which inventor do you believe is responsible for the fortune cookie, the Chinese-American or Japanese-American. Justify your response.**

**The History of the Fortune Cookie**

***Born in California, of Chinese American—or maybe Japanese American—origin***

by Borgna Brunner

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |

Like [chop suey](http://www.infoplease.com/ipd/A0372397.html), fortune cookies are an American invention. They originated in [California](http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108187.html), but who the actual inventor was, and which city in California is the true home of the fortune cookie, has continued to be a matter of debate. Unequivocally not Chinese, the fortune cookie may in fact not even be Chinese American.

**Chinese or Japanese, Angelino or San Franciscan?**

One history of the fortune cookie claims that David Jung, a Chinese immigrant living in [Los Angeles](http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108549.html) and founder of the Hong Kong Noodle Company, invented the cookie in 1918. Concerned about the poor he saw wandering near his shop, he created the cookie and passed them out free on the streets. Each cookie contained a strip of paper with an inspirational Bible scripture on it, written for Jung by a Presbyterian minister.

Another history claims that the fortune cookie was invented in [San Francisco](http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108603.html) by a Japanese immigrant named Makoto Hagiwara. Hagiwara was a gardener who designed the famous Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park. An anti-Japanese mayor fired him from his job around the turn of the century, but later a new mayor reinstated him. Grateful to those who had stood by him during his period of hardship, Hagiwara created a cookie in 1914 that included a thank you note inside. He passed them out at the Japanese Tea Garden, and began serving them there regularly. In 1915, they were displayed at the Panama-Pacific Exhibition, San Francisco's world fair.

**Judicial Activism**

In 1983, San Francisco's pseudo-legal Court of Historical Review held a mock trial to determine the origins of the fortune cookie. (In the past, the Court had ruled on such pressing topics as the veracity of [Mark Twain's](http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/people/A0849801.html) quote, "The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco" and the origins of the [Martini](http://www.infoplease.com/ipd/A0530033.html). [\*](http://www.infoplease.com/spot/fortunecookies.html#footnote)) To no one's surprise, the judge (a real-life federal judge from San Francisco) ruled in favor of San Francisco. Included among the evidence was a fortune cookie whose message read: "S.F. Judge who rules for L.A. Not Very Smart Cookie." Equally unsurprising, Los Angeles has denounced the ruling.

**From Confucius to Smiley Faces**

Fortune cookies became common in Chinese restaurants after World War II. Desserts were not traditionally part of Chinese cuisine, and the cookies thus offered Americans something familiar with an exotic flair.

Although there have been a few cases reported of individuals actually *liking* the texture and flavor of fortune cookies, most consider the fortune to be the essence of the cookie. Early fortunes featured Biblical sayings, or aphorisms from [Confucius](http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/people/A0813210.html), [Aesop](http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/people/A0802634.html), or [Ben Franklin](http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/people/A0819488.html). Later, fortunes included recommended lottery numbers, smiley faces, jokes, and sage, if hackneyed, advice. Politicians have used them in campaigns, and fortunes have been customized for weddings and birthday parties. Today messages are variously cryptic, nonsensical, feel-good, hectoring, bland, or mystifying.