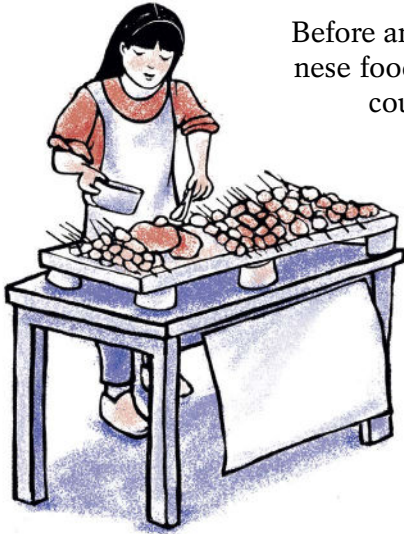




3 THINGS I KNOW / 3 THINGS I LEARNED

Before and after reading *Chinese Menu* have students write down 3 things they know about Chinese food. Then at the conclusion of the book, have them write 3 things they learned. Students could also write down what they “know” and “learned” for each section of the book. They may be surprised about the origins of various Chinese dishes and that dessert is generally not served with Chinese food.



PREVIEWING PERITEXT

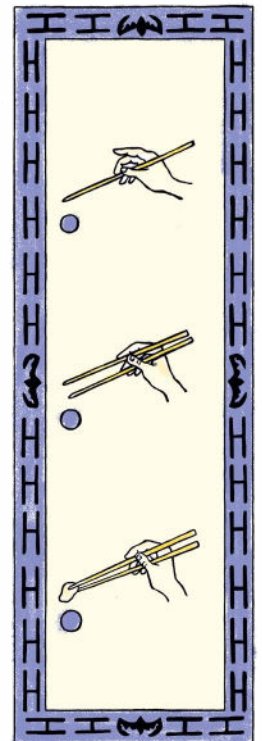
Peritextual elements are the physical features of a book such as the cover, book casing, endpages, dedication, title page, table of contents, index, and back matter. Analyzing peritext encourages readers to identify, navigate, and connect the text to their own interests as well as to other works that might influence the interpretation of a text. *Chinese Menu* has a wealth of peritext that adds to the enjoyment of reading this book. View the book jacket and then remove it to expose the book casing that resembles a restaurant menu. The endpages are revealed once the book is opened and depict a variety of items featured in the stories. As the book is read, return to the endpages frequently and identify the items by writing the names on sticky notes and placing the note next to the pictured item. Next, examine the table of contents and discuss how it is structured. As the book is read, pause to ponder the boxed information along with the illustrations.

CHOPSTICKS AND CONVERSATION

On page 15 of the Introduction, Grace Lin writes, “Confession time! I don’t use chopsticks correctly.” Lin then offers information on how to hold chopsticks as well as chopstick etiquette. Provide a pair of chopsticks to each student (quantities of wooden chopsticks can be purchased for a nominal cost). Then fill a bowl with wadded-up balls of paper containing the first line from an introduction to the stories in *Chinese Menu*. Students can attempt to pick up the pieces of paper with their chopsticks until the bowl is empty. Afterward, students can read the lines on the paper and discuss their responses and connections.

WORD ORIGATION WALL

The word wonton can be traced to two different Chinese words. The first is the Chinese word 雲吞 — yutun in Mandarin and wan tan in Cantonese. This word can be literally translated to ‘swallowing clouds,’ which is a very poetic way to think about eating the soup” (p.97). Generate a word origination wall and write down the various Chinese words and their origin as students read *Chinese Menu*.





CHINESE SAYINGS AND ENGLISH IDIOMS

There are a variety of common Chinese sayings shared throughout *Chinese Menu*. For example: “Nothing is more delicious than dumplings; no position is more comfortable to sleep than lying down” (p. 69); “You can eat without meat, but you cannot eat without soup” (p. 93); and “If you want to have a happy life, eat rice every day” (p. 129). As students read the stories, have them write each saying they encounter on a sticky note. Then students can locate English idioms, which are widely used sayings or expressions, and write these on sticky notes as well. Some common ones might include: “A blessing in disguise”; “Make a long story short”; and “Under the weather”. Compare the common Chinese sayings with the English idioms and have students discuss which ones make sense and those that can be interpreted literally. As an extension to this activity, students can write their own sayings.

LIVELY LITERATURE DISCUSSION

Chinese Menu lends itself to discussing the stories featuring foods in the various sections. Students can be divided into small groups with each discussing a section that includes appetizers, tea, soup, side orders, chef’s specials, or dessert. Roles can be assigned for each member of the group and might include:

Discussion Director generates open-ended questions that will guide and foster discussion.

Location Scout identifies where and when the food item originated and the events that influenced the creation of it.

Food Critic writes a review of one or more of the dishes featured in that section.

Word Wizard presents words from the stories that are interesting, unique, or unfamiliar.

Illustrious Illustrator offers a single image or drawing that encompasses one or more stories.

Text Connector makes a text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connection to initiate a discussion. Ask others in the group to make their own connections.

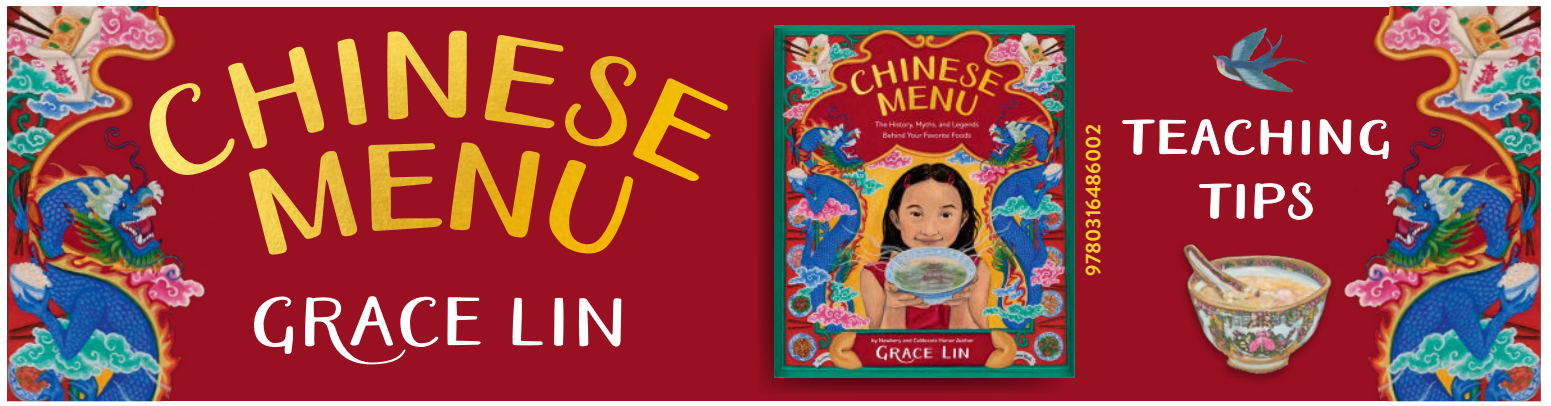


ONE-PAGER

Chinese Menu is filled with compelling stories, visual images, unique food names, interesting vocabulary, author quotes, and text features. Students can generate a One-Pager to demonstrate their understanding and connections to various stories. The website <https://www.teachwriting.org/612th/2018/5/18/one-pagers-as-a-response-to-literature> contains directions for creating a One-Pager along with templates and student examples. While the website examples may illustrate responses to fiction, this is also a great instructional tool for nonfiction.

DELIGHTFULLY DELICIOUS WORD CLOUDS

Grace Lin uses tantalizing language to describe menu items such as egg rolls or spring rolls: “Those crispy, golden deep-fried cylinders filled with savory goodness (p. 75)”. Have students gather descriptive words like *crispy*, *deep-fried*, or *savory* to create a word cloud. Some websites that are useful for creating word clouds include <https://worditout.com>, <https://wordart.com>, and <https://monkeylearn.com/word-cloud>. Variations of this activity would be for students to generate a list of terms describing food such as *tantalizing*, *delectable*, *scrumptious*, *mouthwatering*, and *yummy* or to create a word cloud based on their own favorite food items using *delightfully delicious* words.



FABULOUS FORTUNE COOKIES

In *Chinese Menu*, one story shares that mooncakes concealed a slip of paper urging Chinese families to attack the Tartars (p. 254). An adaptation of the mooncake became the fortune cookie when Chinese immigrants arrived in the United States. These unique cookies contain positive messages concealed within the fortune cookies. Have students generate their own messages of encouragement or select meaningful quotes. These “fortunes” should be written on small strips of paper. Fortune cookies can then be made by:

1. Cutting a four-inch circle out of paper (paper cups are a great tool to use for tracing).
2. Curving the top of the circle until it touches the bottom and place a dot of glue so the circle now resembles a cylinder.
3. Sliding the “fortune” into the cylinder/cookie and turn the cookie so the seam is on one side. Take the open edges and bend them together to make a crease.
4. Adding another dot of glue near the center crease. The fortune cookie is now ready to be shared.

MY LIFE IN FOOD

As part of the introduction to each section and story, Grace Lin often shares her experiences and memories of Chinese food. Students can write about a memorable food experience they have had such as eating something new, describing a food that is part of a cultural or family tradition, or explaining a dish they had that is unique to a specific place or location. A variation of this response would be for students to create a timeline to illustrate their life in food and when those foodie experiences occurred.



These Teaching Tips were created by Cyndi Giorgis, Professor of Literacy Education and Children’s Literature at Arizona State University.