

CLASSROOM GUIDE

THE Best Kind of MOONCAKE

Written and Illustrated by Pearl AuYeung



Published by

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About the Book:

Once upon a morning in Hong Kong, in the alley of Tai Yuen Street, a girl is promised a mooncake with a double-yolk center — the best kind!

The special mooncake seems like the only excitement on an otherwise boring day in the market where nothing changes. . . until an exhausted stranger falls to his knees right in the street! He ran through forests, swam through rivers, and even stowed away on a ship, all to get to Hong Kong. Now at the end of his journey, all he needs is a bite to eat, but no one seems willing to help — not even the girl, if it means giving up her prized treat.

The girl's ultimate decision has surprising, far-reaching consequences in this mostly true story that reminds us that even the smallest acts of kindness hold the power to change lives, for the giver as much as the receiver.

About the Author/Illustrator:

Pearl AuYeung was born in Hong Kong, raised in Shanghai, and now lives in California, where she designs toys. Childhood visits to her grandma and uncle's pajama hawker stall on Tai Yuen Street, as well as her passion for learning about people's pasts, inspired Pearl to tell this story in her debut picture book. She enjoys cooking, perusing internet rabbit holes, and mooncakes with double-yolk centers.



Written and Illustrated by Pearl AuYeung

📷 @Pearlwiththepearlearrings



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Discussion Questions

- Describe the setting of *The Best Kind of Mooncake*. Locate the words and phrases in the story that transport you to Tai Yuen Street. Using the attached reproducible, note how the story activates your five senses. What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you see? What can you feel? What can you taste?
- Look closely at the illustrations. What are the expressions on the faces of the characters? How do they change throughout the book? Why is this important to the story?
- Where do you think the man was before he arrived at the market? What evidence in the story supports your ideas?
- What message do you think the author would like you to take away from this story? Why do you say that?
- This book was based on the real experience of the author. What questions would you ask the author if you had the opportunity?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.



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Activities

PAY IT FORWARD

Let's explore the kindness that is offered in *The Best Kind of Mooncake*. Discuss the effect that one person's kindness can have on other people. On Tai Yuen Street a simple act of kindness changes the mind of countless people and the ripple effect lasts for decades. The phrase "pay it forward" has become increasingly popular. How can we incorporate this into our everyday lives?

The girl in the story learns from her mother what it means to be kind. The girl's immediate reaction is not positive, but with modeling from her mother and the passing of time she realizes the impact that kindness has on a community. How might you impact your own community through kindness?

Design a system of Pay it Forward in your learning space. Younger readers may need more direction, but more mature learners may have their own personal experience and vision for this challenge. Facilitate the following steps to guide learners through a meaningful experience.

- Discuss what it means to "pay it forward". Give an example from *The Best Kind of Mooncake*.
- Students and teachers can share ideas of spreading kindness in our everyday world.
 - Kindness: The World We Make | Ripple Effect | Pay It Forward | Kindness Video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AKNW9fGLig>
 - Kid President + Glad to Give present How Good Spreads
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bH5ozEo1Ao4>
- Share personal experiences.
- Brainstorm specific acts of kindness that are age appropriate for the group.
- Discuss a plan for creating the "domino effect" among the group. If this idea is too abstract, set up dominoes and show the group how one small act such as a smile can lead to the next person giving a compliment, which leads to someone offering an invitation to play. The concrete representation of the dominoes may begin a deeper understanding of a subtle move turning into a significant event.

Younger Learners: Guided and Structured by the Teacher

- Post a Kindness Tree in your learning space. Ask everyone to write an act of kindness on a paper apple. When someone receives a kindness, they can then pick a new apple and pay it forward. They simply complete the suggested kindness that is written on the apple. Connect the apples to the dominoes so your young community can make the connection between small acts adding up to larger positive changes.
- Create a graffiti wall of kind acts. When someone observes or personally delivers a kindness, they can add it to the wall
- Propose a community service project. This can be customized to meet the needs of the community.

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Mature Learners: Guided by the Learners and Structured by the Teacher

- Guide a conversation and set goals for the Pay it Forward system.
 - Essential Questions:
 - What are examples of acts of kindness?
 - What will begin the domino effect?
 - How will the kindness continue?
 - What evidence will we look for to determine success?
- Discuss limitations and guidelines (safety, boundaries, and cost)
- Teachers offer suggestions and guidance as necessary.

Whether this project stays small or takes on a life of its own, it's sure to show kids the importance of starting somewhere on the path to a better world.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

LIBRARY OF KINDNESS

The Best Kind of Mooncake is a narrative about an act of kindness that impacts many people. Pearl AuYeung knows the importance of sharing a story and illustrating the surroundings to accurately convey the feeling and the environment. Her process is intentional and thorough. Visit and explore her website. Here you can read about Pearl AuYeung's inspiration and writing process. Pearl AuYeung - The Best Kind of Mooncake: <https://pearlauyeung.myportfolio.com/the-best-kind-of-mooncake>

AuYeung's narrative writing incorporates her personal experience, family oral history, cultural elements, and imagination. She has woven an important message throughout a beautiful book. You can highlight Pearl AuYeung's drawings and thoughts as you guide new writers to shape their own voice and writing style. Showing actual sketches that turned into entire books can inspire young authors to pick up the pencil and start small. It may take them to new and exciting places or may help them understand more deeply people, places, and experiences they already know!

Now, let's turn the pen over to the audience. Encourage your students to explore their own personal experiences, oral histories, cultures and creativity as they themselves become the writers!

Invite readers to become writers by creating picture books of a kind act that was delivered or received. Offer guidance through each step of the writing process:

- Brainstorm and Prewrite
- Draft
- Share and Edit
- Revise
- Publish



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Bookmaking Ideas: <https://www.artistshelpingchildren.org/bookmaking-crafts-make-books.html>

Dedicate a section of the library in your learning space to stories of kindness. This can be a source of inspiration for all who want to further explore this theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

RECIPE FOR KINDNESS

The Best Kind of Mooncake features a sweet pastry with a double yolk center. This Chinese baked good is often enjoyed during the Mid-Autumn Festival. It signifies lunar appreciation and its circular shape signifies togetherness and completeness. How can such a sweet treat be packed with so much meaning? It is typically cut into 4 to 8 pieces and shared, unless of course you are a hungry traveler! If a mooncake can be used to share kindness, what other things can food do?

A recipe can hold a special place in a family's heart. It can be a source of enjoyment, love, and nourishment. It can also be a symbol of culture and tradition. Is there a recipe that makes you feel a certain way? What recipe does your family, neighbors, friends, or other group you are a part of share traditionally? Perhaps there is a recipe that you can find that reminds you of a memory or an event? There are multiple paths this activity can take:

1) Family and Friends Recipe:

Are you looking to deepen your understanding of a food that often reappears in your family and friends group? Do you want to do a deep dive into why and how this food has become so important in your life? Interview family members or friends to learn about the recipe or food that you feel holds special meaning or is simply a staple in your routines. Here are ideas to guide your inquiry:

- What recipe would you say is “your special recipe”?
- Why is this recipe important to you? What does the recipe mean to you?
- What memories, emotions, or feelings does it evoke?
- What is the cultural significance of this food?
- Is this a tradition that spans generations or is it unique to your immediate family members or group of friends?

2) Recipe/Food Cultural Research:

Are you looking to expand your cultural horizon? Do you want to learn how and why a certain food is important? Choose a food and learn about its place in society. Here are some questions to guide your inquiry:

- What food do you want to learn about?
- Where did this food originate?
- How is the food made?
- How is the food significant to the people who eat it?
- When is the food typically consumed?

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Recipe Celebration!

Share your findings in an essay format. You can even pair your writing with a sample* of the food that is so special to you. This could make a truly special community event. Tables can be arranged to match the stalls the shopkeepers stand in on Tai Yuen Street in Hong Kong. A true celebration of food, community, culture, and kindness!

If you would like to share the best kind of mooncake, here are Pearl Au Yeung's recommendations:

- The 香港 (Hong Kong) 美心 (Cantonese: Mei Sum Mooncake; Mandarin: Mei Xin) 月饼 brand. Hong Kong Maxim's Mooncakes 香港美心月饼 original flavor with salted yolk. The filling is a really sweet paste made of lotus seed.
- There are also ice cream mooncakes that may be available in your local Chinese grocery store. An authentic mooncake experience would be the best kind of culminating experience for The Best Kind Mooncake!

* Be allergy aware! Be sure to provide recipes and complete ingredient lists. And check in with your school's food-in-the-classroom policy.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.



This guide was written by Room 228 LLC with public school teacher Shannon Rheault as lead teacher.
Room 228 loves kindness . . . especially when yummy food is involved!
To learn more, visit www.rm228.com.

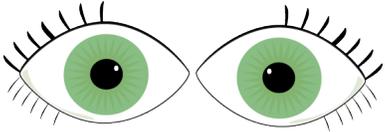
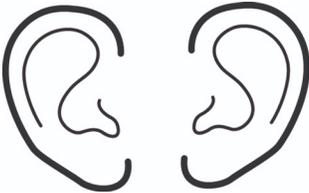
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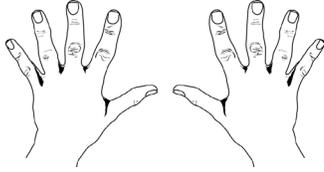
Visit Tai Yuen Street!

Ok, maybe a trip to Hong Kong isn't realistic, but a reader can always transport themselves to the setting of the story they are enjoying. Use your imagination and focus on each of the five senses to create a mindful moment that will place you in the market without leaving your comfy reading spot.

As you read *The Best Kind of Mooncake*, list words or phrases to explain how Pearl AuYeung uses the text to bring you to the setting and make it familiar to you:

<p>What do you see?</p> 	
<p>What do you hear?</p> 	
<p>What can you smell?</p> 	
<p>What can you taste?</p> 	

What do you feel physically?



What do you feel mentally?



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What food is most precious to you? Add it to the drawing!

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