

## Making Inferences

A writer is about to make an inference about you:

If you've ever been to a Chinese restaurant, you've most likely received a fortune cookie at the end of your meal. You've also probably wondered how they managed to get that tiny slip of paper into a hard, closed cookie.

An inference is an educated guess. People often use these words and phrases when they are making them:

- Most likely
- Probably
- Might
- May

What makes a guess educated?

The author's inferences are most likely based on research and experience. Chinese food restaurants are popular and exist throughout the country. Most of these restaurants serve fortune cookies at the end of meals. As a result, the author can infer that most customers at Chinese restaurants have seen fortune cookies.

You can use the text and your own experiences to make inferences. Here's an example from my notes:

What does the text say?	Why did the author most likely include this?
<p>The invention of fortune cookies as we know them today is difficult to pin down.</p>	<p>The author probably added "as we know them today" because other forms of fortune cookies existed.</p> <p><i>(I wondered why the author thought that this phrase was required: It would only be required if there were other kinds of fortune cookies in the past.)</i></p>
<p>Most people nowadays believe that fortune cookies were created by a Japanese man named Makoto Hagiwara in 1914 ... However, many still hold to the popular belief that fortune cookies were invented by a Chinese-American named David (Tsung) Jung, who owned the Hong Kong Noodle Company in Los Angeles.</p>	<p>The author most likely presents both sides of the fortune cookie debate to show objectivity.</p> <p><i>(Since I have read and discussed other articles, I know that reporters are supposed to be objective when they are informing an audience. As a result, they often present all major sides of a story to show that they are not taking one side.)</i></p>

Here is another excerpt from the article. What inferences can you make about it?

<b>What does the text say?</b>	<b>Why did the author most likely include this?</b>
<p>Fortune cookies are a prominent part of Asian-American cuisine and have filtered into popular culture as well. People create customized fortune cookies to send funny messages to friends and family—and sometimes to even propose marriage to a loved one! They are even used in advertising campaigns for corporations. Even though popular belief says otherwise, modern fortune cookies are as American as baseball and apple pie.</p>	