Good Luck Gold by Janet Wong

Take 5: Poetry Brain Breaks

Poetry can bring comfort and joy, reduce stress, and increase language learning. And it’s fun!

These brain breaks have everything you need to share poetry one-on-one or as a group, in English or Spanish or Chinese.

Thanks to our friends at Pomelo Books, publishers of The Poetry Friday Anthology for Celebrations and more.

Take a 5-minute poetry brain break!
Watch the “Good Luck Gold” video read-aloud with your child or students
Follow along with the poem on Page 2
Print and share copies of the activity on Page 4
Have fun together with these conversation starters:

- Read the poem aloud and invite students to make a “thumbs up” gesture every time they hear the word “gold” or “golden.”
- We often celebrate big events with special foods or treats; for example, birthdays often include a birthday cake or cupcakes. What foods are students’ favorites for special occasions?
- This poem uses a regular rhyme to link the stanzas. Work with students to identify the rhyming pairs of words.
- Talk with students about the older people in their lives. What names do they go by? Grandmothers might be called Grandma, Nana, Oma, Abuela, PoPo, NaiNai, Halmoni, or something else. Every language has different labels for different family members and elders!
- Encourage children to talk about fun family celebrations that they have experienced for birthdays or other occasions. Many cultures have special traditions like the one in this poem, particularly for the first birthday.

Want more?
For more poetry fun, visit PomeloBooks.com.
The Story Behind the Story
for the poem “Good Luck Gold” by Janet Wong

I was born in Los Angeles. My Chinese grandparents threw a "red egg and ginger" party for me at a restaurant in L.A.’s Chinatown. This is where I was given the good luck gold jewelry that you can see on the cover of my book Good Luck Gold & MORE.

Some families throw a baby shower before the baby is born, or the celebrate the birth right after returning from the hospital.

At a school in New York City, I asked a group of children who were born in China and lived there until they were ten years old (or older) if they had been given good luck gold. One of them said, "I’ve heard about it. That’s some old-fashioned custom, right?"

Many Cultures, Many Stories

Janet Wong is half-Chinese and half-Korean, but she was born and raised in California where you can find many people and cultures from all over the world.

As a child, Janet learned some traditional Asian customs, but she also celebrated birthdays sometimes by breaking a piñata filled with candy. This is a tradition common in Mexican culture, but some people believe that piñatas might have originated in Spain or Italy — or even China!

How are babies and birthdays celebrated in the culture(s) of your heritage?

Can you research it online or in a book?

Can you ask someone about it?

Try this!

What is your family’s earliest photo of you?
Does your family tell any stories about when that photo was taken? Share and compare these with a good friend!

Try this!

What makes you feel lucky? Can you write a short poem about a lucky charm, birthday gift, family tradition, or baby memory?

Try this!

The poet Janet Wong shares interesting background information about her poem too. Read the "story behind the story" above.

Find more poems from Janet and others at PomeloBooks.com
GOOD LUCK GOLD by janet wong

When I was a baby
one month old,
my grandparents gave me
good luck gold:
a golden ring
so soft
it bends,
a golden necklace
hooked at the ends,
a golden bracelet
with coins that say
I will be rich
and happy someday.
I wish that gold
would work
real soon.
I need my luck
this afternoon.

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GOOD LUCK GOLD  
by janet wong

Chinese translation by Yiping Song-Yang

XING YUN JIN SHOU SHI
幸运金首饰
Dang wo yi ge yue da de shi hou
当我一个月大的时候
Wo de zu fu mu gei le wo ji yang xing yun jin shou shi
我的祖父母给了我几样幸运金首饰
Yi ge jin jie zhi rou ruan dao ke yi wan qu
一个金戒指柔软到可以弯曲
Yi tiao liang tou dai gou de jin xiang lian
一条两头带钩的项链
Yi ge dai you ying bi de jin shou zhuo shang mian xie zhe
一个带有硬币的金手镯上面写着
You yi tian wo hui fu you he xing fu
有一天我会富有和幸福
Wo xi wang shou shi shang de hua hen kuai ying yan
我希望首饰上的话很快应验
Jin tian xia wu wo jiu xu yao zhe xie hao yun
今天下午我就需要这些好运！

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Each of the items below are considered to be lucky in some cultures. Can you identify each one? Which ones do YOU think are lucky? Color in your favorites!

- turtle
- horseshoe
- 4-leaf clover
- elephant
- ladybug
- acorn
- rainbow
- cricket
- dragon
- egg
- seven
- wishbone

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