

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Fancy Bread

by Anita Nahta Amin

Anil froze when he saw the flyer at school. *Culinary Academies of America* presents *Junior Cooking Camp*. He had to go! But he needed money to get there.

So, the next morning on Saturday, Anil got to work. He sifted, stirred, rolled, cut, and baked. He iced, glazed, powdered and sprinkled. He stacked the cookies he'd made into cellophane bags. Then, he tied a ribbon around each bag with a tag that read *Anil's Gourmet Cookies*.



"Now," Anil said, pulling off his flour-dusted apron, "I'll make my dreams come true." He knocked door-to-door, trying to sell the cookies. "I need money for cooking camp," he told each neighbor. "I want to be a chef."

"Just bought some cookies," one neighbor said.

"On a diet," the next one said.

"No money," the third admitted.

"Let's try Puri's," his grandma, Nanima, suggested after Anil came home with a lot of good luck wishes but no money.

They drove to Puri's Indian Grocery Store.

"Cookies?" Mr. Puri waved his hand dismissively. "No sweets. Too many sweets." He pointed toward some shelves stacked with desserts from India.

"But those are canned," Nanima argued. "These are fresh. And what is that you're selling?" She motioned toward the freezers. "Frozen Indian meals. How long does it take to make a fresh paratha (flat bread) and aloo (potato)?"

Mr. Puri shrugged. "Nowadays, too long."

Nanima tut-tutted. "People are moving too fast these days. Fast this, fast that. People will forget how to cook, I tell you." She and Anil left.

Once home, Anil put the cookies on the kitchen table. "Guess I'm not going to camp."

Nanima patted Anil's shoulder. "Not all chefs go camping, huh. Some cook dinner at home."

In a bowl, she mixed flour, oil, water, and spices. She split the paratha dough with Anil.

Sighing, Anil broke a bit off, rolled it into a ball, and flattened it with the palm of his hand. As he rolled it out, he thought about how traditional paratha shapes were so boring. Circles, triangles, nothing fun.

His gaze strayed to some nearby cookie cutters. All that work he'd put into making those cookies... rolling, cutting...

He blinked. Cookie cutters cut dough. Why couldn't he use them on paratha dough?

Anil broke into a huge grin. As he worked, he suddenly felt Nanima beside him.

Frowning, Nanima picked up his parathas one by one. "A car. A cat. A flower? What kind of parathas are these?" After some silence, she said, "I should like eating the cat."

"Maybe other people will like them, too," Anil said. "I could sell them... even make seasonal parathas – bells for winter, shamrocks for spring..."

"Fancy parathas," Nanima mused.

"Maybe the Indian store will buy some," Anil hoped.

Nanima called Puri. "Puri, I have a big moneymaker for you. My grandson's parathas. They're fast but fresh and fancy." She paused. "You'll see them? Good."

They cooked the parathas and brought them to Puri.

Puri frowned. "Too small, these parathas. People like big parathas, so you have more to scoop vegetable with." Parathas were like edible spoons. "You see?" Puri demonstrated by tearing off a piece of paratha. He pretended to scoop up some potato. Then, he put the paratha piece and pretend potato into his mouth.

"But these are more fun for kids," Anil said.

Puri blinked. "Parathas for kids?" Puri slowly nodded his head. "Something new. And delicious. We'll try them."

A few days later, Puri called Anil.

When Anil hung up, Nanima asked, "Well? What did Puri want?"

Anil grinned before hurrying to the kitchen. "Fifty parathas each week! Kids love them! Camp, here I come!"

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1. Why does Anil have trouble selling his cookies to Puri when he and his grandma first go to the Indian grocery store?

- a. The cookies don't taste good.
- b. People would rather eat brownies.
- c. There are already a lot of cookies at the Indian grocery store.
- d. People think they are too expensive.

2. According to the story, what is the meaning of the word *paratha*? What does the word *aloo* mean?

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3. What does Anil do with his paratha to make it different than anything else that Puri sells in his Indian grocery store?

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4. According to the story, why doesn't Puri like Anil's special parathas at first?

- a. The parathas are too flat.
- b. The parathas are too fluffy.
- c. The parathas are too big.
- d. The parathas are too small.

5. How does Anil convince Puri that the problem he sees with Anil's parathas really isn't a problem at all?

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6. At the end of the story, what is the deal that Puri makes with Anil regarding his parathas?

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Fill in the missing letters to form a vocabulary word from the story. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. t \_ \_ a \_ \_ \_ t i \_ \_ n \_ \_ l

**hint:** customary to a certain culture or group

\_\_\_\_\_

2. d \_ \_ s \_ \_ i \_ \_ s i \_ \_ e l \_ \_

**hint:** without showing interest; rejecting an idea

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_ \_ d i \_ \_ \_ e

**hint:** able to be eaten

\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_ \_ o u \_ \_ \_ e \_ \_

**hint:** exceptional quality of food

\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_ \_ i \_ \_ t e \_ \_

**hint:** sorted fine particles or powder to remove lumps or larger pieces

\_\_\_\_\_

6. d e \_ \_ o \_ \_ \_ t r \_ \_ t \_ \_ d

**hint:** showed how something is done

\_\_\_\_\_

7. \_ \_ e l \_ \_ o \_ \_ h a \_ \_ e

**hint:** a thin, transparent material used for wrapping

\_\_\_\_\_

8. \_ \_ o u \_ \_ \_

**hint:** a mixture of flour and water that is used for making bread or pastries

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# ANSWER KEY

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1. Why does Anil have trouble selling his cookies to Puri when he and his grandma first go to the Indian grocery store? **c.**

- a. The cookies don't taste good.
- b. People would rather eat brownies.
- c. There are already a lot of cookies at the Indian grocery store.**
- d. People think they are too expensive.

2. According to the story, what is the meaning of the word *paratha*? What does the word *aloo* mean?

**Paratha means "flat bread." Aloo means "potato."**

3. What does Anil do with his paratha to make it different than anything else that Puri sells in his Indian grocery store?

**Anil uses cookie cutters to turn his paratha dough into fun shapes.**

4. According to the story, why doesn't Puri like Anil's special parathas at first? **d.**

- a. The parathas are too flat.
- b. The parathas are too fluffy.
- c. The parathas are too big.
- d. The parathas are too small.**

5. How does Anil convince Puri that the problem he sees with Anil's parathas really isn't a problem at all?

**Anil explains that the small parathas in fun shapes are perfect for kids.**

6. At the end of the story, what is the deal that Puri makes with Anil regarding his parathas?

**Puri will allow Anil to sell fifty parathas per week in his store.**

# ANSWER KEY

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Fill in the missing letters to form a vocabulary word from the story. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. t r a d i t i o n a l traditional  
**hint:** customary to a certain culture or group
2. d i s m i s s i v e l y dismissively  
**hint:** without showing interest; rejecting an idea
3. e d i b l e edible  
**hint:** able to be eaten
4. g o u r m e t gourmet  
**hint:** exceptional quality of food
5. s i f t e d sifted  
**hint:** sorted fine particles or powder to remove lumps or larger pieces
6. d e m o n s t r a t e d demonstrated  
**hint:** showed how something is done
7. c e l l o p h a n e cellophane  
**hint:** a thin, transparent material used for wrapping
8. d o u g h dough  
**hint:** a mixture of flour and water that is used for making bread or pastries