Make Holiday or Themed Cookies

Description
In this activity, students will prepare, make, and bake a sugar cookie recipe. They will finish the cookies by decorating them with a holiday or other theme.

Lesson Objectives
Students will be able to:
• follow a basic sugar cookie recipe and produce consistently sized and shaped products
• choose a theme or design for their cookies
• prepare icing in various consistencies and colours to decorate their cookies, and
• use a piping bag and necessary tools to decorate their cookies.

Safety Considerations
Basic food and kitchen safety

Assumptions
Students:
• understand ingredient measurement, food handling safety, and appropriate clothing and personal attire in kitchens, and
• know basic math functions (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) and understand the concept and use of decimals.

Terminology
Consistency: In terms of icing, it’s the amount of flow the icing will have once it is piped on a cookie, or the general viscosity of the icing.
Coupler: An attachment that can be added to a piping bag to allow multiple changes of piping tips.
Creaming: The incorporation of air into a batter/dough through the mixing of solid fat and sugar into a smooth, pliable, and aerated mass.
Piping bag/pastry bag: A cone-shaped bag often of cloth or plastic, through which various ingredients are forced through a shaped tube.
Piping tip: A small plastic or metal tip which sits in a pastry bag and delivers the contents of the bag in a decorative, consistent manner.
Parchment paper: An oven-proof paper used to prevent products sticking to a pan.
Scaling: Altering a recipe to yield a different amount of product.
Sifting: Removing lumps from dry ingredients by passing through a fine mesh or screen sieve.

Yield: The number of items a recipe/formula will make.

**Estimated Time**
30 minutes: Introduction and video
30 minutes: Dough
60–120 minutes: Chilling (may be done overnight)
60 minutes: Cutting and baking
60–120 minutes: Decorating

**Recommended Number of Students**
This activity should be done individually.

**Facilities**
- Home Economics lab or cafeteria kitchen
- Access to reference materials (Internet-accessible computer and/or textbooks)

**Resources**

**Seven Steps to Flawless Rolled Cookies with Julia M. Usher**  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wo6GsxLsbro

**How to Make Royal Icing (Plus, Coloring and Consistency Adjustments)**  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GO0_aNbL6Do

**How to Topcoat, Outline, and Flood Cookies**  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_C0Fv_8sPQ
Demonstrating Skills And Knowledge

Procedure

1. Introduce the topic. This activity can be completed over 3–4 days depending on class time:
   - **Day 1**: Introduction, prepare dough, plan designs and shapes.
   - **Day 2**: Roll, bake, cool, and store cookies.
   - **Day 3**: Make icing in two different consistencies, one for piping and one for flooding in a minimum of two colours, decorate cookies.
   - **Day 4**: Complete decoration. Allow time for drying, evaluating, presenting, and bagging.

2. Review the procedure for making basic sugar cookies.
3. Hand out recipes for cookie dough.
4. Have students make a recipe of dough, then chill and store until needed.
5. If students have extra time or for homework they should sketch two to three designs or patterns for their cookies. These can be based on a holiday, theme for the season, or an event.
6. Show video on how to roll cookies.
7. Have students roll to correct thickness, cut, and bake the cookies, then cool and store until needed.
8. Cookies should be wrapped in plastic and stored at room temperature.
9. Show videos on icing consistencies and how to decorate.
10. Have students prepare icing based on their plans.
11. Fill the piping bags.
12. Students select their best 12 cookies for decorating.
13. Students pipe and finish their cookies allowing time to dry thoroughly before moving or packaging them.
14. Remind students to take photos of their finished cookies and post a reflection in their journal or portfolio.
15. Have students walk around and see the work of their fellow students.
**Evaluation Guidelines**

Assessment can be based on how well the cookies followed a theme or plan but also consider uniformity. Are all the cookies uniform in size and decoration? Let students know that this is an important factor in commercial baking: being able to replicate products consistently.

Students can use the chart on the following page for self-evaluation of cookies.

Consider co-creating the assessment criteria with your students at the beginning of the activity/project. You may want to include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Extending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performs professionally in the kitchen following health and safety guidelines.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applies mathematical principles to appropriately scale recipe to desired yield.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures ingredients accurately.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixes, rolls, cuts, and pans cookies emphasizing uniformity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sets oven temperature and correctly assesses when product is baked.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cools and stores product properly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluates cookies for quality, taste, and texture in the form of self-reflection notes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Cookie Evaluation Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Extending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dough Quality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dough is correct texture: even and smooth, easy to roll.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rolling and Cutting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookies are flat and smooth on top, even thickness, same size, shape is not distorted, sides are straight.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baking</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookies are evenly baked, not brown, not under-baked, shape was maintained after baking (the cookie did not spread too much or lose its shape).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Icing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icing is correct consistency for its use, colours are mixed properly and used in a creative manner, colour is even or consistent (mixed a large enough batch) and at least two colours are used.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decorations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icing is applied to the right location on the cookie. Decorations are consistent from one cookie to the next, or stay within a theme. Decoration is precise, not messy. A clear theme is evident. Cookies are all identical if the same pattern or coordinating if varied. Decoration is realistic or artistic.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sugar Cookies

Ingredients

- 60 ml margarine
- 60 ml shortening
- 125 ml sugar
- 1½ eggs
  - 4 ml vanilla
- 440 ml flour
- 2.5 ml baking soda
  - 5 ml cream of tartar

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F).
2. Cream margarine and shortening together.
3. Gradually cream sugar into butter and shortening until light and fluffy.
4. Add eggs and beat well, add vanilla.
5. In another bowl, sift together flour, baking soda, and cream of tartar or baking powder.
6. Stir in dry ingredients or use a stand mixer (do not use hand mixers) using only enough of the dry ingredients to make a soft creamy dough that can be flattened in hands and maintains its shape.
7. Wrap dough in plastic wrap, label it and put it in the fridge for at least 2 hours.
8. Roll chilled dough out on a lightly floured surface with a floured rolling pin to not less than 0.5 cm thick.
9. Cut into desired shapes and place on a greased or parchment covered cookie sheet, allow space (2–3 cm) between cookies to expand. Re-roll unused dough and continue to cut into desired shapes.
10. Bake for about 8 minutes until set and dry to the touch.
11. Remove from cookie sheet and cool in a single layer on cooling racks.
12. Decorate as desired.

Note: if cookies stick to the cookie cutter, dip the cutter in flour before cutting the dough.
**Royal Icing**

**Ingredients**
1 pound (3¾ cups) powdered sugar (sifted if lumpy)

¼ tsp cream of tartar

2½ large pasteurized egg whites (5½ T, or substitute 4 t packaged dried egg whites and ¼ cup water)

1 teaspoon almond extract, vanilla, or lemon juice

**Preparation**

1. Mix all the ingredients together using an electric hand or stand mixer until the icing is smooth. Mix long enough to get a whiter finished icing, 1–2 minutes starting slowly and finishing on high speed. Scrape down mixer bowl as you go.

2. This is a very thick icing that doesn't drop easily from a spoon.

3. Divide icing into several bowls about 1 cup each (250 ml) and add 1–3 drops of gel food colouring, (paste colouring can also be used), stir to combine. Liquid colours are not recommended as they change the consistency.

**Icing Consistency**

**Top coating**: For use without a dam.

- 1½–2 tsp water for each cup of royal icing.
- A trail falling off a spoon into a bowl will disappear in about 15 seconds.
- Apply with a craft paintbrush with bristles removed.
- Don't go too close to the edge because you don't want it to flow off.

**Dam/border icing**: For piping around the edge of a cookie to hold in flooded icing.

- Add ½–¾ tsp of water per cup of royal icing.
- A trail falling off a spoon into a bowl will disappear in about 10 seconds.
- Try to pipe the border slowly so it doesn't break.

**Flooding icing**: For use inside a dam to create a smooth top, to prevent dips.

- Add 2–3 tsp of water per cup of royal icing.
- A trail falling off a spoon into a bowl will disappear almost instantly.
- Apply with craft brush or small spoon depending on size.
- Draw out with a toothpick or turkey trussing needle.
- Make sure all air bubbles are popped.
- Dry quickly with a craft or hair dryer or put in a warm oven (200°F) for a couple of minutes.
- Don't over dry or the icing will crack.