

Activity Idea

Connect to Nature with Haikus

Recommended for Adults

A haiku is a short form of Japanese poetry consisting of 3 short lines that do not rhyme. There are only 17 syllables in a haiku divided into each line with 5 syllables in the first line, 7 in the second, and 5 syllables in the last line. The origins of haiku poems can be traced back as far as the 9th century, but were developed to the form we use today in the 16th Century by Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō. Haikus are typically written in present tense on the subject of nature and describe a brief moment in time, or juxtapose two images or ideas. Throughout history, the haiku form has evolved to various structures and syllabic patterns, while still preserving the original philosophy of being succinct and evoking a particular emotion.

Here are some traditional and non-traditional haiku examples below.

Toward those short trees
We saw a hawk descending
On a day in spring.
- Masaoka Shiki

In the twilight rain
these brilliant-hued hibiscus -
A lovely sunset
- Matsuo Bashō

Poppies awaken
early from their naps; flip-flops
in February.
- Terry Wolverton

Autumn eve – my
mother playing old
Love songs on the piano
- Jack Kerouac

eBooks & Audiobooks

- *Haiku: Classic Japanese Short Poems* on Hoopla tinyurl.com/HaikuLarrabee
- *The River of Heaven* on Hoopla tinyurl.com/RiverOfHeaven
- *The Haiku Form* on Hoopla tinyurl.com/HaikuForm
- *How to Haiku* on Hoopla tinyurl.com/HaikuRoss
- *102 Haiku Journal* on Hoopla tinyurl.com/102Haiku
- Poetry In Your Pocket Collection on Biblioboard tinyurl.com/PoetryInYourPocket

Online Learning

Poetry Writing 101 on Universal Class tinyurl.com/UniversalClassPoetry



Film

- *Poetry In America: Season 1* on Hoopla tinyurl.com/PoetryInAmericaS1
- *A Poet in the Field* on Kanopy tinyurl.com/PoetField

Online Resources

- Poetry Around the World (Google Earth Voyager) tinyurl.com/PoetryAroundTheWorld
- Poem A Day from Poets.org poets.org/poem-a-day
- Archival Poetry Readings from Poetry Center Online tinyurl.com/PoetryCenterOnline

Activity

Try writing a haiku about a nature scene or object that inspires you using the template below. You can find inspiration by looking out your window or thinking about a moment you’ve experienced in a natural setting. You can even look at photos of nature in a magazine, book, or online. They can be moments of nature in an urban setting or be about one of the 4 seasons. Then just jot down the experience, using details related to your senses. Don’t worry about writing in a certain format, just write down any concrete details of the experience. Then reflect on how this nature scene makes you feel or gives you any new perspectives.

Now use the details you’ve recorded down and try writing them into a 5-7-5 syllable haiku format. Try finding two different details or thoughts that can be compared or juxtaposed to each other, so that your haiku has a striking or surprising last image. Once you’re done, read your poem out loud or to someone else to see if you like the way it sounds!

Brainstorm: Jot down your observations about your natural scene, season, or object

Sight:	Smell:	Touch:	Taste:	Sound:
Emotions, Reflections, New Perspectives:				

Title: _____

_____ (5 Syllables)

_____ (7 Syllables)

_____ (5 Syllables)