

Ceremonies - Haiku

Summary

Students will be introduced to the Japanese poetry form known as haiku and experiment with writing some haiku themselves.

Materials

Information sheet on how to write haiku poetry with aids

Background for Teachers

In the exhibit "Ceremonies: A Tale of Sister Cities", there are four panels with haiku-like poetry written by Atsushi Yamamoto that reflect the four seasons. Haiku is a 17 syllable verse consisting of three metrical phrases of 5, 7, and 5 syllables. Haiku poems can describe anything, and very often the subject is about nature and the seasons. One must paint a mental picture in the reader's mind. Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry that had its beginnings in the 15th century in the form of "renga." Renga was a poem composed by several poets, each adding verses to a central theme. In the 16th century a more humorous form evolved called "haikai" was more for the common people. The first verse of both the "renga" and "haikai" is called "hokku." These "hokku" were sometimes presented as independent poems. These were the origin of "haiku." While it seems simple enough to compose a haiku poem, good haiku takes much practice and insight. However, the style is distinct, and students may enjoy trying to compose some haiku themselves.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will learn how to compose haiku poetry and write a poem about Salt Lake City in haiku form.

Instructional Procedures

Remind students of the haiku poems in the exhibit. Ask them what observations they made about the form and what was said.

Read some examples of haiku written by some of the more well-known poets from Japan (e.g. Basho, Yosa Buson, Masaoka Shiki). Tell students that they will learn how the poems were constructed, and that they will have the opportunity to try writing some haiku on their own.

The following are some instructions to keep in mind when composing haiku. (1) Think about a theme and write down some of the words that come to mind on that theme. (2) Organize your thoughts roughly into three lines. First set the scene, then expand on that by expressing a feeling, and finally making an observation. (3) Adjust your haiku into three lines, the first with 5 syllables, the second with 7 syllables, and the third line with five syllables. It may take some time and substitutions to make it fit.

Here are some ideas with which to practice:

| | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|---------|
| Little | butterfly | floating | over |
| Strange | flower | playing | against |
| Delicate | mountain | always | upon |
| Bright | leaves | growing | behind |
| Yellow | moon | stands | with |
| Red | sun | looking | into |
| White | frog | resting | |
| Lost | lake | laughing | |
| Quiet | cloud | | |
| | seed | | |

spring is beginning

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| winter | is over |
| summer | time |
| autumn | perfume |
| the right | coming |
| morning | breeze |
| cold | dream |

Like the haiku about Matsumoto at the exhibit, have students try writing a haiku reflecting some aspect of Salt Lake City.

Bibliography

- [Haiku for People](#)
- [Haiku](#)
- [History of Haiku](#)

Authors

[SHARON NAGATA](#)