

Japanese Culture and Wellbeing

Kimberley Evans with the Japan Society (2020)

Lesson 4: Being Mindful with Cherry Blossom

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the significance of cherry blossom in Japan
- To learn what a haiku is

Learning Outcomes:

- Students can explain why cherry blossom is important in Japan
- Students can use a range of adjectives to describe cherry blossom
- Students demonstrate mindfulness and take notice of the world around them

Curriculum Links:

Mental and Physical Wellbeing

Keywords:

Mindfulness, sakura (cherry blossom), haiku poems, seasons, hanami (cherry blossom viewing), phrase, fragment

Resources:

Cherry Blossom Background Notes

Presentation: Being Mindful

Video: [O Hanami](#)

Teacher Script: Cherry Blossom Relaxation

Additional Resources:

Video: How to Haiku

Writing Haiku Worksheet

Task 1

- Use the **Being Mindful Presentation**. Introduce the theme of the lesson: Exploring the idea of mindfulness by noticing the beauty of nature. Ask students about the title image: Does anyone know what this is? Have you seen anything like this before?
- Show students the three images of cherry blossom on slide 3. As a starter activity, give them two minutes and ask them to write down as many adjectives as they can to describe the cherry blossom

Estimated Time: 5 minutes

Task 2

- Using the information on the slide and in the **Cherry Blossom Background Notes**, introduce the students to the importance of cherry blossom in Japan.
- If using, click the image on the slide to show students the short **O Hanami Video** explaining spring customs relating to cherry blossom in Japan. You could ask older students to make notes as they watch and feedback afterwards.
- Pair the students and set the discussion task: "What lessons can we learn from the Cherry Blossom?" You can reveal first sentence as an example or display all of them to prompt the students' discussion.
- Take feedback and emphasise that we need to appreciate the good things in each moment.

Estimated Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Task 3

- Introduce students to haiku using the information on the slide. (For more information on haiku see the Additional Resources).
- Show the example haiku to the students and read each one aloud twice. You may choose to clap out the rhythms as a class. Ask students what references to nature they can see.
- Students can discuss the haiku activity in pairs, or give them time to write down their individual ideas. You can encourage them to close their eyes when they are imagining their chosen place.
- If time, students can write their own haiku on one of the suggested topics. You may prefer to brainstorm together and write a single haiku as a class. Students do not need to count syllables, instead focus on choosing a 'phrase' (almost a sentence) and pairing it with a 'fragment' (a few words). Refer to the **Writing Haiku Worksheet** as a guide or to model an example.
- Volunteers read out their ideas, or completed haiku (read out loud twice) to the class.

Estimated Time: 15 - 25 minutes

Task 4

- Guide students through the reflection. Taking notice is one of the 5 ways to wellbeing. Ask students why they think this improves wellbeing. Draw out answers about appreciating the

moment, not worrying about the future or past, enjoying the time we have. Tell students that, like the cherry blossom, time goes quickly and we should appreciate the good things when we have them.

- End with the relaxation activity linked to cherry blossom. Pupils close their eyes and relax. Play music if appropriate and read out the **Cherry Blossom Relaxation Script**.

Estimated Time: 5 minutes

Extension Activities

- Get students to write a haiku outside using the **Writing Haiku Worksheet**. This can also be a homework activity. Teachers can watch the **How to Haiku video** for more information about teaching haiku.