

Exploring Poetry through Haiku: Journeys

Haiku are a part of Japanese culture, often **mistakenly taught as just a three-line, 5-7-5 syllable** poems. This short scheme introduces the true essence of haiku through the theme of journeys. Not only will students explore the act of physical journeys and sensory experiences, but also abstract journeys and the power of poetry to connect us to our natural, urban and social landscapes, as well as history and moments in time.

Poetry is often about journeys, literal and metaphorical, and these three lessons use haiku as a way to help students to encapsulate and respond to those 'journeys' in a simple and non-threatening way. The unit takes a simple, engaging, and innovative approach to introduce haiku to students whilst synthesising key concepts, imagery and poetic tools. Many students often struggle with formulating personal responses to poetry focusing more on what the 'right answer' is to a poem, rather than developing a feeling or an opinion about it. **These lessons aim to help students engage with poetry by getting to the heart of the emotion and voice.**

These lessons also focus on **the joy of speaking poetry**, encouraging students to enjoy and connect with the experience of sharing their poems and reading poetry out loud. It puts emphasis on the importance of vocabulary, particularly Tier 2 words, as a way to ensure students are comfortable with using and responding to more complex vocabulary.

CURRICULUM LINKS

KS3 Reading Curriculum

- Read a wide range of fiction, including poems, with a wide coverage of genres, historical periods, forms and authors, including high-quality works from English literature and seminal world literature (Japanese haiku poetry).

- Learn new vocabulary, relating it explicitly to known vocabulary and understand it with the help of context and dictionaries.
- Make inferences and referring to evidence in the text.

Read critically through:

- Knowing how language - figurative language, vocabulary choice, grammar, text structure and organisational features - present meaning.
- Recognising a range of poetic conventions and understanding how these have been used.

KS3 Writing Curriculum

- Write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length for pleasure by:
- Writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences, including: poetry and other imaginative writing (haibun);
- Drawing on knowledge of literary and rhetorical devices from their reading and listening to enhance the impact of their writing.

Plan, draft, edit and proofread through:

- Considering how their writing reflects the audiences and purposes for which it was intended.
- Amending vocabulary, grammar and structure of their writing to improve its coherence and overall effectiveness.

KS3 Spoken Language Curriculum

Speak confidently and effectively through:

- Using Standard English confidently in a range of formal and informal contexts, including classroom discussion.
- Giving short speeches and presentations, expressing their own ideas and keeping to the point.
- Improvising, rehearsing and performing poetry in order to generate languages and discuss language use and meaning, using role, intonation, tone, volume, mood, silence, stillness and action to add impact.

Wider Curriculum Links:

- Key Stage 3 Art Curriculum (learning about seminal Japanese artists: Hiroshige)
- PSHCE/SMSC – Emotional health and wellbeing; mindfulness.

RESOURCES

- Worksheets including example haiku, an introduction to the technique of the phrase and fragment in haiku ('the cut') and exploring the effects of tense in writing, adapted from How to Haiku – Beyond 575 resource by Paul Conneally.
- Images of Utagawa Hiroshige's Ukiyo-e for students to work with. Additional images from the Hiroshige series of Stations of the Tokaido Road are online and make a good link into the journeys theme of this unit of work. See: https://www.hiroshige.org.uk/Tokaido_Series/Tokaido_Series.htm
- How to Haiku – Beyond 575 resource introducing other Japanese haiku masters, **haibun**, haiku walks (ginko), the use of **kigo** (seasonal words and phrases), and a guided worksheet for writing haiku outside.
- Teachers may like to look at *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches* by Matsuo Basho for his prose and poems.

Keywords

Haiku; haibun; kigo(seasonal words); Basho; Ukiyo-e (woodblock prints), Hiroshige; Tokaido Road; phrase; fragment; seasons; senses; tense; syntax; prose.

Assessment Methods

Formative assessment:

Check pupils' understanding about the poetic traditions of their own cultures/countries? Are they able to compare and contrast their own cultural experience with that of Japan?

Assessment during activities:

Circulation during written and reading tasks to guide pupils and gauge understanding.

Taking feedback from written tasks and checking answers.

Peer assessment – asking pupils to feedback on classmates' spoken presentations of poetry and written compositions.

Lesson	Learning Objective	Suggested Activities
1	<p>Title: Haiku poetry and sensory engagement</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>Explore the uses of the 5 senses in description to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify words which explore the senses • Explore the effect of sensory language • Explain how sensory language creates meaning 	<p>Task 1: Experience Japan</p> <p>Show students the images on Worksheet 1. Ask them to explore the pictures of Japan and write down the connotations they have.</p> <p>Task 2: Exploring the concept of journeys</p> <p>Introduce the idea of journeys. Why do people take journeys? Students should reflect mindfully on an image of a Hiroshige painting.</p> <p>Task 3: Journeys using five senses</p> <p>Choose one of the images and explore the journey that one of the characters takes. Write a description using the five senses to explore this journey. Students should highlight wherever they have used an example of one of the five senses.</p>
2	<p>Title: Describing the world around us through Haiku</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the purpose and impact of a Haiku. • Explore the key message and connotations of a text. 	<p>Task 1: The Frog and Old Pond Haiku</p> <p>Discuss the famous Basho Haiku in English and Japanese</p> <p>Task 2: How to Haiku: Beyond 5-7-5</p> <p>Introduce the idea of Haiku by showing the video and discuss.</p> <p>Task 3: Exploring the world around us</p> <p>Introduce the idea that Haiku is an exploration of the world around us through language. Explain the idea of a 'phrase' and a 'fragment' as a summary of a</p>

		<p>haiku. Provide a worksheet with a range of Haiku, and discuss.</p> <p>Task 4: Re-imagining the scene</p> <p>(Can be homework or extension activity) Students write a haiku based on the original image and share these as class and providing peer feedback</p> <p>Extension Activities</p> <p>Extend the exercise further and ask students to write a series of haiku.</p>
3	<p>Title: Exploring different tenses in poetry through Haiku</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the different tenses. • Understand the importance of using different tenses in poetry. • Experiment with using different tenses and explain their effect. 	<p>Task 1: My journey to school</p> <p>Introduce the Basho quote – ‘to know of the pine, go to the pine’. Ask the students to work in pairs, taking it in turns to describe their journey to school.</p> <p>Task 2: Writing the journey</p> <p>Write about the journey to school for 15 minutes. Remind students of the need to focus on the real experience rather than to exaggerate or imagine it.</p> <p>Task 3: Becoming ‘present’ with Haiku</p> <p>Discuss the tense that the students have chosen to write in (past most likely) and why students think Haiku is written in the present tense. Students edit their work and turn it into present tense.</p> <p>Extension Activities</p> <p>Students write on another theme and edit their own work, then create a haiku from the piece.</p>