

Japan: Seasonal Series

April O Hanami

The Japan Society with Katy Simpson (2019)

Learning Objectives:

- To learn about the customs and activities of O Hanami (Cherry Blossom Viewing) in Japan.
- To identify and discuss seasonal words and ideas about spring.
- To apply seasonal vocabulary and practise use of the present tense to produce haiku poetry.

Learning Outcomes:

- Improved understanding of the cultural significance of O Hanami in Japan.
- Original, written work (haiku compositions) inspired by the theme of spring.

Curriculum Links:

National Curriculum Guidelines for English Key Stage 2 (Upper):

- To increase their familiarity and appreciation for a range of poetry forms (haiku)
- To prepare poems to read aloud as performances, showing understanding through intonation, tone and volume so that the meaning is clear to an audience.
- To understand what they mean by identifying how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning.
- To draft and write text by selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning.
- To evaluate and edit writing by assessing the effectiveness of their own and others' writing.

National Curriculum Guidelines for MFL Key Stage 2:

- Discover and develop an appreciation of a range of writing in the language being studied.
- Broaden their vocabulary and develop their ability to understand new words.

Keywords:

Sakura	Cherry Blossom	Haru	Spring
O Hanami	Cherry Blossom Viewing	Tanzaku	Poem Card
Haiku	Japanese short poem	Mochi	Rice cakes
Kigo	Seasonal word	Inari	Sushi wrapped in fried tofu

Resources:

- Presentation: O Hanami
- Video: [O Hanami](https://youtu.be/pRVjUMFnE88) (https://youtu.be/pRVjUMFnE88)
- Video: [How to Haiku: Beyond 5-7-5](https://youtu.be/-HRmckKqVmqq) (https://youtu.be/-HRmckKqVmqq)
- Worksheet: Cherry Blossom Template

Additional Resources:

- Worksheet: Haiku Worksheet
- Lesson: [Exploring Climate Impacts](#) (external resource) *Met Office*

Task 1: What is Cherry Blossom?

- Show the image of a cherry blossom on the title slide of **O Hanami Presentation** and tell students this tree is very famous in Japan. Ask students if they know what this tree is? Explain that cherry blossom is called 'sakura' in Japanese.
- Explain that cherry blossom is so important in Japan that every year there is a cherry blossom forecast on the news to predict where cherry blossom will appear first (see Slide 2).

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Task 2: What is O Hanami?

- Explain how Japanese people celebrate by viewing Cherry Blossom using the [O Hanami video](#).
- After watching, ask the students to imagine they are experiencing O Hanami in Japan.
 - What can you see?
 - What are you feeling?
 - What can you hear?
 - What can you hear?
 - What are you eating?
 - What is the weather like?
 - What time of day do you think it is?
- Students can make notes in their workbooks or draw pictures to illustrate their imaginings.

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Task 3: How to Haiku

- Introduce the basic concept of haiku poetry which is often based on nature and awareness of the seasons. Show the example of cherry blossom haiku on **O Hanami Presentation**.
- In pairs or small groups, pupils will discuss the best words to describe 'spring' or 'nature'. Each student should choose 5 and write them on a **Cherry Blossom Template**. Model the activity first using the example of 'O Hanami' on the 'Spring into Poetry' slide. Students may wish to use dictionaries/thesauruses to check spellings and improve their range of vocabulary.
- Using their notes on O Hanami, and the words they have come up with, students practise writing their own haiku. This is a 3 line poem in the present tense. You might want to watch the [How to Haiku: Beyond 5-7-5](#) video resource before the class as useful preparation on how to compose a haiku, or use the **Haiku Worksheet** as a guide.

- When students have written their haiku, it is recommended to get pupils to read them aloud, saying their poem twice like traditional haiku poets would.
- You may wish to ask students to evaluate each other's performances and choose their favourite poem in the class.

Estimated Time: 30+ minutes

Extension Activities

1. Pupils can practise writing the Japanese kanji for 'flower' and 'watching' by looking at the characters on the presentation. You might like to do this with a finger in the air instead.
2. Give students the **Haiku Worksheet** to practise writing haiku further. This could be set as homework or an outdoors lesson in the summer.
3. Ask pupils to paint the Japanese kanji for O Hanami on a poem card (tanzaku), along with their own haiku poetry relating to spring, and hang up in a classroom display.
4. Organise your own O Hanami picnic and encourage students to appreciate the beauty of the nature around them.
5. Use the topic of O Hanami to talk about climate change and the impact of spring arriving earlier in Japan and the UK (you could compare temperatures or cherry blossom forecasts from different years). The Met Office lesson looks at key climate changes in 6 other countries.