

Japanese Haiku



Haiku is a type of traditional Japanese poetry characterized by a specific format and subject matter.

Haiku are constructed of three lines. The first line contains five syllables, the second line contains seven, and the third has five.

The subject usually has to do with nature or the seasons.

Haiku are simple, yet beautiful, and the fact that they contain very few words means that every word should be meaningful!

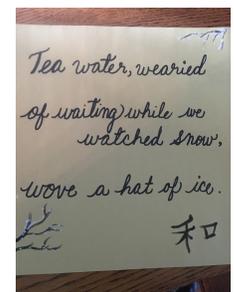
The presentation of a haiku can also be important. Japanese calligraphy is an art form itself, and when poems are written in Japanese, their appearance can be as beautiful as the meaning of the words. Haiku are often accompanied by other symbols or delicate drawings to complement the subject.

Here's one of my favorite haiku:

***Tea water, wearied
of waiting while we watched snow
wove a hat of ice.***

Notice how the first line has five syllables, the second has seven, and the last has five. The poem includes the images of tea (something very important in Japanese culture!), ice, and snow--all elements of nature.

I re-wrote this haiku and added a few ice-studded branches, as well as the Japanese character for "peace" in the lower right-hand corner, because to me, the poem conveys a very peaceful, tranquil feeling. I did this very quickly to show you an example of what can be done with haiku; with a little more time I'm sure you could do much better!



Try writing your own haiku to share with the class and/or your EC! Consider taking the extra steps of adding a few simple illustrations and/or a Japanese character or two. A few basic characters are included in this packet, but feel free to research and find more! There are also a couple of paintbrushes, in case you are inspired to research more and try your hand at calligraphy.

Strength / Power

力

Luck

運

Peace

和

PEACE

Friendship

友

Kindness

親切

Faith

信

Love

愛

Hope

希

Prosperity

榮

Happiness

福