

# Lesson Name: **Tropical Haiku**

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Fundamentals of Reading  
Broward College EPI 0010  
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**Subject Area:** Visual Arts  
**Grade Level:** 9 - 12  
**Time Period:** 7 blocks of 1 hour

## **Purpose of Lesson:**

In this lesson students will read, write and illustrate haiku poems describing nature in the tropics.

*Haiku show us the world in a water drop, providing a tiny lens through which to glimpse the miracle and mystery of life. Combining close observation with a moment of reflection, this simple yet highly sophisticated form of poetry can help sharpen students' response to language and enhance their powers of self-expression.*

([www.webenglishteacher.com](http://www.webenglishteacher.com))

## **Objectives:**

By the end of this lesson students will learn:

- How a haiku poem is composed and how it differs from other forms of poetry
- How a haiku poem paints a picture or creates an image with only a few descriptive words
- the special spirit and history of haiku
- to interpret examples from Japanese masters as well as some Western ones
- How to develop a vocabulary and ideas for writing poetry
- How to create a haiku poem based on personal experience
- How to critique and edit a poem
- How to use a Chinese ink brush
- the traditional format for ink Scroll painting
- the vocabulary and techniques for Sumi-e painting
- How to use visual art to interpret a poem

## **Materials:**

Large Newsprint sheets  
Markers  
Practice sheet of brush paper  
Chinese Brush  
Water  
Newsprint in 9"x22" format

Pencils  
Light box  
Ink  
Rice or Watercolor Paper in 9"x22" format  
Black backing paper in 11" x 29" format  
Glue stick  
20" piece of narrow ribbon

## **Suggested titles:**

Robert Hass. 1994. *The Essential Haiku*. The Echo Press.  
Cor Van Den Heuvel. 1986. *The Haiku Anthology*. Touchstone.  
Basho, Translated by Lucien Stryk. 1985. *On Love and Barley, the Poetry of Basho*. The Penguin Press  
RH Blyth, 1981. *Haiku (4 Volumes)*. Hokuseido Press  
Yolanda Mayhall, 1989. *The Sumi-e Book*. Watson-Guptill

## **Preparation:**

Select several Haiku to read aloud. Make sure they use the 5-7-5 syllable pattern. Copy 2 of them onto the board or newsprint for student reference and syllabication review.

Print out enough copies of the attached sheets of haiku samples for everyone to share or read. If you have books on Haiku mark some of your favorite pages.

Print out or post Handout and suggestions from below.

## **Activities:**

### **Day 1: What is Haiku? Show vs. Tell**

Have the students read through the attached sheets of haiku samples. Ask each student to pick one or two to read. Discuss how the writer develops the image. What are the keys to creating an image?

In the case of haiku, the images are not "imaginative" in the sense of invented, fantasized or fictionalized. They are usually closely observed aspects of nature. They are real experiences. They are images in the sense that they give the reader pictures (and sounds, textures and smells) with which to recreate the experience as a whole. They show the experience, in the vivid present; they do not tell about it, reporting on something that has passed and summing up the judgment to be made about it. The reader is in the middle of it, not being told about it second hand.

The famous haiku poet, Basho, said, "The haiku that reveals seventy to eighty percent of its subject is good. Those that reveal fifty to sixty percent we never tire of." What this

tells us is that the nature of haiku is in letting the reader's response finish the poem. ...  
"Don't sum up for the image!"

An image SHOWS, and an explanation TELLS: All forms of imaginative literature, including drama and film, follow the same principle, which can be summed up in the slogan, "Show, don't tell." Think of television drama, or your favorite films, or novels: they show you a character in a difficult situation, and leave you to judge.

As they read haiku aloud, students should find that each includes a turning point, often marked by a dash or colon, where the poet shifts from description to reflection, or shifts from close-up to a broader perspective.

Introduce the history of Basho & Issa

[http://www.haiku.insouthsea.co.uk/teachbasho\\_self2.htm](http://www.haiku.insouthsea.co.uk/teachbasho_self2.htm)

**Notebook Assignment:** Go through some books and write down 4 examples of descriptive language word pictures.

Examples:

"The blackness of night came in, like snakes around the ankles" - Caroline Cooney, *Wanted*, p.176

"Flirtatious waves made passes at the primly pebbled beach" – Lillian Jackson Braun, *The Cat who Saw Stars*, p.120

"The fog comes in on little cat feet" – Carl Sandburg, *Fog*

## Day 2: Criteria

Haiku should include what Japanese poets call a *kigo* -- a word that gives the reader a clue to the season being described. The kigo can be the name of a season (autumn, winter) or a subtler clue, such as a reference to the harvest or new fallen snow. Through the years, certain signs of the seasons have become conventional in Japanese haiku: cherry blossoms are a kigo for spring, mosquitoes a kigo for summer. Sometimes, too, the kigo will refer to an individual moment in the natural cycle, such as dawn or moonrise, without reference to a particular season. The kigo is also important to the haiku's effect, anchoring the experience it describes in a poetic here and now that helps sharpen the imaginative focus. Here in Florida we do not have the traditional 4 seasons so we will need to generate a vocabulary to describe our own tropical climate.

First the students will use their observational skills, real world knowledge and vocabulary knowledge to create a South Florida word chart in small groups. We want to capture as much visual imagery as possible in these words.

1. Arrange students into three heterogeneous groups, with reading, writing, and speaking ability balanced among the groups. Each group will need table space. Tell students that each group will create a word chart. Give each group one piece of chart paper and two markers.

2. Ask one group of students to think about tropical NOUNS, and write a list of words or phrases that depict things (nouns) that are indicative of it. For example, responses might include palm trees, pelicans, coconuts, tourists, suntan lotion, beach towels, flip-flops, flamingos, etc.
3. Ask another group of students to chart words that will describe the tropics (ADJECTIVES). For example, responses might include hot, boiling, sizzling, bright, windy...
4. The third group will write words that are actions for the tropics (VERBS). Examples might be swim, fish, water-ski, rain, etc.
5. Give students time to generate as many words as they can on one piece of chart paper. When the three word charts are complete, post them so that all students can review all charts and give input. Some words may be added to (or deleted from) each chart as students discover that they are categorized by parts of speech.

Next, the students will read and listen to samples of haiku to determine haiku criteria. Traditional haiku are a seasonal reflection on nature in a three line 5-7-5 syllable format. We will be looking to create a visual picture in words. In this restricted format we want to describe a scene where this description causes an emotional response in the reader.

Write out on the board several keys to haiku:

- Very short: just three lines of 5-7-5 syllables long or less.
- Descriptive: most haiku focus sharply on a detail of nature or everyday life. "Kigo"
- Personal: most haiku express a reaction to or reflection on what is described.
- Structure: Haiku divide into two parts, with a break coming after the first or second line, so that the poem seems to make two separate statements that are related in some unexpected or indirect way. In Japanese, this break is marked by what haiku poets call a "cutting word." In English and other languages, the break is often marked by punctuation. This two-part structure is important to the poetic effect of a haiku, prompting a sense of discovery as one reads or a feeling of sudden insight.

Some suggestions:

- Write about some perception that has stuck in your memory as a vivid picture or a significant moment associated with a particular place.
- Go for a walk and observe the weather, the trees, the birds and anything else. Do it by yourself, with serious attention, taking care to look closely in the spirit of Master Basho. Make notes
- Look at familiar little things through a magnifying glass: the movement of an insect or worm, earth, wood, the skin of your hand etc.
- Write a haiku structured on two smells, two sounds, or any combination of two sense impressions.
- See if you get an idea about a contrast of big and small, rising and falling, delicate and unyielding etc. – but don't try too hard! If it is not based on an observation or experience it will sound contrived.
- Don't write about an idea or a thought. Don't use any abstract nouns. Keep it simple and concrete.

- Stick to accurate observations.
- Have fun!

**Notebook assignment:** take a walk around your neighborhood. Sketch 4 things you noticed on your walk.

### Day 3: Writing

Working alone or in small groups the students will write their own Haiku depicting tropical South Florida images. Each student will produce between 5 to 10 haiku poems.

**Notebook Assignment:** Walk around the block near your house, or in a park. Notice 4 things that would make a good subject for a haiku. use figurative words to describe them.

### Day 4: Reflecting and re-drafting

Students can work in small groups or as an entire class. Ask them to share their haiku with some readers and ask them what they see. If the readers are confused, or see something quite different to what was in the writer's mind, then the poem needs to be revised to achieve the effect you seek. If they respond enthusiastically, you have got an early hit!

What are the differences between the images and the explanations?

1. Senses (are there sounds and smells and sensations in the poem)?
2. Concrete things vs. named objects?
3. Is there a space for the readers to take part in the poem and draw their own conclusions?

Resequencing & Overuse of Adjectives

Use the exercises on this page as examples of how sequencing affects meaning and how adjectives can weaken meaning.

[http://www.haiku.insouthsea.co.uk/teachshow\\_t5.htm](http://www.haiku.insouthsea.co.uk/teachshow_t5.htm)

Finally, have each student choose 1 of their own haiku to illustrate. Have them type it out in a brushstroke font, size 16, add their last name only and cut the poem into a 4"x 4" square.

### Day 5: Introduction to Japanese Sumi-e Scroll Painting

Use the following PDF as examples of Sumi-e scroll painting:

[http://www.clevelandart.org/educef/asianodyssey08/imagepdfs/PamSumiMS\\_images.pdf](http://www.clevelandart.org/educef/asianodyssey08/imagepdfs/PamSumiMS_images.pdf)

This class will be a presentation on Japanese ink scroll painting. The teacher will demonstrate how Japanese books are read and how the type goes up and down. She will then model how a traditional Japanese brush is held, how ink is ground from a stick and the traditional methodology used to teach brush painting in Japan.

1. First, write the vocabulary on the board or overhead so that students see the vocabulary as they watch you demonstrate the techniques.
2. Demonstrate how to create a light ink wash. Try loading the brush with a light wash (a little ink and lots of wash) for soft objects like feathers or mist.
3. Demonstrate how to create fluid elegant lines seen in Japanese paintings using a little more ink and less water. Several styles of Japanese painting (such as Sumi-e) require that you hold the brush very vertically and pull the brush across the paper.
4. Demonstrate “dry brush.” Completely dry the paintbrush so that the bristles separate. Dip the tips of the bristles in ink and drag across the paper. This is excellent for grass and animal fur.
5. Demonstrate various brush strokes in ink painting. Emphasize the very basic techniques (wash, dry brush, etc.) but encourage students to experiment to create more sophisticated brushstrokes as in the Sumi-e style of painting.

Sumi-e is the creation of a painting using black ink. Like haiku, with its economy of words, this type of painting emphasizes an economy of brush strokes. Sumi-e painting is generally done in three generations. The first lines represent the grandfather and are the lightest in color. The second generation will be younger, the father. This paint will be a darker gray. The youngest generation will be represented by black. Large areas of the painting are usually left blank.

Students will work in small groups with water and brushes on specialized painting practice paper to experiment with making marks with these brushes before switching to ink.

Next, the students will create a composition for their scroll using newsprint and pencil. They will transfer their final image in pencil to the rice, or watercolor, paper using a light box. Ask students to try to create a vision in their mind of their painting before starting. Mentally practice the brush strokes and which parts will be lightest and darkest before beginning.

## Days 6 & 7: Painting

Using a traditional scroll format of 9” x 22” the students will create an illustration of their haiku moment in ink on rice, or watercolor, paper using traditional bamboo brushes, When finished they will mount their scroll on black backing paper with the poem below.

Take the backing paper and fold over ½” along the top edge. Run the ribbon along the fold and leave an equal amount of ribbon on either side, then tie a knot at the top. It should form a triangle with the knot at the apex so you can hang your scroll. Glue the fold closed with the ribbon inside. Glue the sumi-e scroll painting on the backing sheet with a 1” border from the top and sides. Glue the typed Haiku poem centered below the scroll, 1” from the bottom of the backing sheet and ½” from the scroll.

**Notebook Assignment:** Write down 4 things that Haiku and Sumi-e have in common.

## Evaluation:

- 4 Notebook assignments
- Student Product: Poem
- Student Product: Scroll

## Rubric for Haiku & Sumi-e

<i>Student Name:</i>	Excellent (10-9)	Good (8-9)	Average (7-8)	Needs Improvement (6-0)	Teacher Rating
<b>Criteria 1</b> – Student participated in all activities <b>Criteria 2</b> – Student uses descriptive language <b>Criteria 3</b> – Student haiku follows haiku criteria <b>Criteria 4</b> – written and visual images relate in subject and concept <b>Criteria 5</b> – Student artwork demonstrates several different sumi-e brushstrokes <b>Criteria 6 – Effort.</b> Took time and care to complete the project correctly. <b>Criteria 7 – Craftsmanship</b> – Neat, clean and complete. <b>Criteria 8 – Notebook</b> – all notebook assignments complete.					
<b>Total Points Possible (80)</b>					<b>Teacher Total</b>

While I give students a rubric with set criteria for evaluating their poem and painting, the process is more important than the product they end up with. Individual discussions with students while monitoring the activity should focus on students' thinking process and the sensitivity they develop with the words and the paintbrush. In this lesson, students will not be able to completely master this ancient art. The focus should be on experimentation and looking for understanding in art and writing.

## Sunshine State Standards:

**(VA.A.1.4)** - Standard 1: The student understands and applies media, techniques, and processes.

**(VA.A.1.4.1)** - uses two-dimensional and three-dimensional media, techniques, tools, and processes to communicate an idea or concept based on research, environment, personal experience, observation, or imagination.

**(VA.B.1.4.1)** - applies various subjects, symbols, and ideas in works of art.  
**(VA.C.1.4)** - Standard 1: The student understands the visual arts in relation to history and culture.  
**(VA.D.1.4.2)** - understands critical and aesthetic statements in terms of historical reference while researching works of art.  
**(VA.E.1.4)** - Standard 1: The student makes connections between the visual arts, other disciplines, and the real world.  
**(LA.A.1.4)** – Standard 1: The student uses the reading process effectively.  
**(LA.B.1.4)** Standard 1: The student uses writing processes effectively.  
**(LA.B.1.4.1)**. selects and uses appropriate prewriting strategies, such as brainstorming, graphic organizers, and outlines.  
**(LA.B.1.4.2)** - drafts and revises writing that: is focused, purposeful, and reflects insight into the writing situation ;has an organizational pattern that provides for a logical progression of ideas.  
**(LA.D.1.4)** Standard 1: The student understands the nature of language  
**(LA.D.1.4.1)** - applies an understanding that language and literature are primary means by which culture is transmitted.  
**(LA.E.2.4)** -Standard 2: The student responds critically to fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama.  
**(LA.D.2.4. 2)** - understands the subtleties of literary devices and techniques in the comprehension and creation of communication.  
**(LA.E.1.4.3)** - identifies universal themes prevalent in the literature of all cultures.  
**(LA.E.2.4.3)** –analyzes poetry for the ways in which poets inspire the reader to share emotions,

## **ESOL:**

**A8** – Modeling  
**B1** – Categorize Vocabulary, **B3** - Word Wall  
**F7** – Read Aloud, **F14** – Visualization  
**G4** – Graphic Representation, **G9** – Rubrics, **G11** – Writing Sample  
**H1** – Cultural Sharing

## **Resources:**

<http://www.haiku.insouthsea.co.uk/index.htm>  
<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/haiku.html>  
<http://www.toyomasu.com/haiku/>  
<http://www.schoollink.org/csd/pages/enql/haiku.html>  
[http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson\\_view.asp?id=39](http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=39)  
[http://edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=250](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=250)  
<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/3890>  
<http://www.international.ucla.edu/shenzhen/2002ncta/lindemulder/scroll.html>  
<http://www.international.ucla.edu/shenzhen/2002ncta/lindemulder/sumi-e.html>

## **Handout:**

# Keys to Haiku

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- Look at familiar little things through a magnifying glass: the movement of an insect or worm, earth, wood, the skin of your hand etc.
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- Have fun!

## Haiku Samples:

### Teachers Source Notes - Master Basho's Spirit

Evening rain:  
the basho  
speaks of it first

natsu-gusa ya / tsuwamono-domo-ga / yume  
no ato  
summer grasses (!) / strong ones' / dreams'  
site

All that remains of  
Those brave warriors' dreamings –  
These summer grasses.

Summer grasses,  
All that remains  
Of soldiers' dreams  
(trans. Stryk)

Ill on my journey –  
dreams roam  
parched moors

Ill on my journey –  
dreams roam  
parched moors

#### **Basho**

An inch or two  
above dead grasses  
heat waves  
(Basho)

The petals tremble  
on the yellow mountain rose –  
roar of the rapids  
(Basho)

I'll take these back  
for the city slickers –  
sour chestnuts  
(Basho)

My way –  
no-one on the road  
and it's autumn, getting dark  
(Basho)

A terrible sound –  
the gilded helmet's  
trapped cricket  
(Basho)

In the moonlight a worm  
silently  
drills through a chestnut  
(Basho)

With what kind of voice  
would the spider cry  
in the autumn wind?  
(Basho)

The shallows –  
a crane's thighs splashed  
in cool waves  
(Basho)

A dragonfly, trying to –  
oops, hang on to the upside  
of a blade of grass  
(Basho)

Deep into autumn  
and this caterpillar  
still not a butterfly  
(Basho)

Watching for snow,  
the boozers' faces –  
a flash of lightning  
(Basho)

All my friends  
viewing the moon –  
an ugly bunch  
(Basho)

Winter gusts  
strop the crag  
through a gap in the cedars  
(Basho)

Like stroking a boil  
the touch of the tip  
of the willow-branch  
(Basho)

Ice in the night –  
the water jar cracks,  
waking me  
(Basho)

One bath  
after another –  
how stupid!  
(Issa)

Thirty p each:  
a cup of tea,  
and a singing bird  
(Issa)

From the bough  
floating downriver,  
insect song.  
(Issa)

The puppy too  
they pelt with snowballs  
till he scampers off!  
(Issa)

Once in the box  
every one of them is  
equal –  
the chess pieces  
(Issa)

Silverfish escaping –  
mothers,  
fathers, children  
(Issa)

Sprawled like an X –  
how carefree,  
how lonely  
(Issa)

My old home –  
wherever I touch,  
thorns  
(Issa)

My empty face,  
betrayed  
by lightning  
(Issa)

Snail – baring  
shoulders  
to the moon  
(Issa)

Bright moon,  
welcome to my hut –  
such as it is  
(Issa)

Are there  
short-cuts in the sky,  
summer moon?  
(Lady Sute Jo, trans. Stryk)

How long the day:  
the boat is talking  
with the shore  
(Shiki)

Fields and mountains  
all taken by snow –  
nothing remains  
(Joso)

The skylark:  
Its voice alone fell,  
leaving nothing behind  
(Ampu)

Asleep or awake  
the night is long –  
the sound of rapids  
(Santoka, translated Stevens)

Wet with morning dew  
I go  
in any direction I want  
(Santoka, translated Stevens)

The thief left it behind –  
the moon  
at the window  
(Ryokan, translated Stevens)

The wind has brought  
enough leaves  
to make a fire  
(Ryokan, translated Stevens)

Spring rain –  
everything becomes  
more lovely  
(Lady Chiyo-ni)

In the Rose Garden  
a man I don't much like  
enjoying the sun  
(George Marsh)

Do this! Do that!  
Spring cleaning  
Mom's in a bad mood  
(Matt Hunt, age 11)

Scooping up water –  
the moon in my hands, I pick up  
nothing at all  
(Sirintip Pumson, age 11)

By the flare  
of each rocket  
I see my friend  
(Misato Hirashita, age 12)

Snowflakes falling  
watching from my window  
sipping hot chocolate  
(Emily Wiseman, age 9)

Five mince pies  
in tissue paper –  
no message, no name  
(Ransetsu)

In a passing car  
just time to see  
the batsman, out  
(Jackie Hardy)

It's no use mouthing  
O after O at me –  
I don't speak goldfish!  
(David Cobb)

Birthday dinner –  
lid of the ricepot  
bubbling over  
(David Cobb)

Children panicking  
out of the tiger cage  
a wasp  
(David Cobb)

Coming down  
through lark-song, my  
daughter  
on a parachute  
(David Cobb)

Minding the robots  
technicians shift their  
weight  
from foot to foot  
(David Cobb)

Close circuit TV:  
watching myself going  
the other way  
(David Cobb)

A scarecrow in church –  
how wide the pleading arms,  
how stiff the knees!  
(David Cobb)

The spiritualist  
his dog snapping  
at unseen flies  
(Brian Tasker)

Embers die  
the chair where the friend sat  
fills with moonlight  
(Cicely Hill)

Down the chimney  
First a pigeon's cooing  
then a crust of bread  
(Cicely Hill)

Under forest trees  
gold globes of horse dung  
steaming  
in the frosty air  
(Cicely Hill)

The scarecrow in the distance;  
it walked with me  
as I walked  
(San-in)

The blade of grass  
sits waving in the wind  
with millions surrounding it  
(Tony, age 12)

Wayne runs down the wing  
with deep thoughts of Wembley  
crash – he's tackled again  
(David, age 11)

Trees waving in the wind  
rain thunders down  
trees loosen their roots  
(Emma, age 7)

The big willow waved  
washing away the breeze  
leaving fresh branches  
(Jason, age 11)

Hard rain reveals  
in the garden mud  
glints of sharp glass  
(Connaire Kensit)

Waves crash  
against fortifications  
dead of night  
(Michael Gunton)

Behind a lone tree  
on the mountain ridge  
immense clouds moving  
(Michael Gunton)

In the forest  
a man shouting  
day after day  
(Michael Gunton)

In spring sunshine  
its face worn away  
the sandstone saint  
(Michael Gunton)

Just echoing boards  
this empty house  
where we laughed and cried  
(Jim Norton)

Dare I tell him?  
From my neighbour's dung-  
yard  
a double rainbow  
(Jim Norton)

Beyond the crossroads  
deep into autumn  
the hillroad disappears  
(Jim Norton)

Each morning in spring  
the birds and the toaster  
doing their stuff  
(Koji)

Winter starlings –  
a hundred-bird silence  
over my head  
(Koji)

The yellowed leaves  
are the feelings of the tree  
falling away  
(Koji)