



Japan Lesson Plan

Grade Level: K-2 **Activity Time:** 20-30 Minutes

Materials

- Japan Brochure
- Haiku Examples
- Haiku Worksheet

Introduction: Read and complete the brochure with students. Tell them now they've read about Japan, they're going to write a special kind of Japanese poetry called a **haiku**.

Start by asking children if they know any poems. Some examples you might share to start the conversation:

Jack and Jill

By Mother Goose

Jack and Jill. went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down and broke his crown,
and Jill came tumbling after.

Humpty Dumpty Sat on a Wall

By Mother Goose

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

The Poetry Foundation has some great resources on children's poetry if you're looking for more examples and information..

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/mother-goose>

Next, tell students you will be reading them a special kind of poetry called a Haiku. Haikus are one of the most important forms of traditional Japanese Poetry. A haiku is a very short poem with just 3 lines. The first line has 5 syllables, the second line has 7 syllables, and the last line has 5 syllables. Usually haikus are about nature, but modern day poets have also written haikus about city life. Haikus can also be about a moment that is important to you such as holidays, school, hobbies, or chores. Here's one example you might want to write in a place where children can see:

Winter Haiku

Over the wintry
forest, winds howl in rage
with no leaves to blow.

-Natsume Soseki (1867-1916)

This poem is public domain

The Puppy

White and fluffy fur
Curled up in a little ball
The pup is asleep

Take a minute after you read the poem to count the syllables with the children. Write a 5 next to the first line, a 7 next to the second line, and a 5 next to the third line, so they can remember how many syllables are in each line. Ask, what are some of the things you notice about this haiku that are similar to the poems you already know? What's different?

Activity:

First, have a brainstorm session, so students have some topic ideas for their haikus. Some guiding questions you could ask:

- What do you see outside the window?
- What things do you see/hear in your backyard? In your neighborhood?
- What is your favorite animal?
- What is your favorite season?
- What special traditions and holidays do you celebrate?
- What are some of your favorite hobbies?
- What do you do on a typical day?

After you've generated a list of topics for inspiration, students will write their own haikus. Since haikus are so short, challenge them to write 2-3 of their own original works. Encourage students to write the number of syllables next to each line to double check their work.

Wrapping Up:

Have students share their haikus with one another.

- What did you write about?
- Why did you choose this topic for your haiku?
- What was the easiest part of writing a haiku?
- What was the most challenging part of writing a haiku?