

Haiku how to

A workbook for you
be inspired - learn and grow
nature, seasons, life



Brockville
Public Library

Haiku how to

challenge yourself to write some haiku

Being thoughtful, mindful and focused
in an activity like creative writing
is good for your brain.

We've put together some instructions with
help from MasterClass.

<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-a-haiku-in-4-easy-steps#what-is-a-haiku>

Haiku how to

What Is a Haiku?

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry made of short, unrhymed lines that evoke natural imagery. Haiku can come in a variety of different formats of short verses, though the most common is a three-line poem with a 5-7-5 syllable pattern.

What Is the Traditional Haiku Structure?

Defining haiku in terms of syllables and sentences becomes complicated once you translate the poetry across languages. Some translators argue that 12 English syllables would correlate more closely to the 17 sounds called on used by Japanese haiku poets. Another structural difference born out by translation is that Japanese haiku are written straight across in one line, while English-speaking poets use two line breaks to separate their poem into three lines.

However, there is a common structure that most haiku poems follow. It is the 5-7-5 structure, where:

The entire poem consists of just three lines, with 17 syllables in total

The first line is 5 syllables

The second line is 7 syllables

The third line is 5 syllables

Haiku how to

4 Common Themes of Haiku Poetry

Nature themes and imagery evoking a specific season are the traditional focus of haiku poetry. Haiku poems often feature juxtaposition of two images.

Nature and the seasons. Describing the season was the original purpose of haiku, and to this day poets often focus on the natural world and how it changes throughout the year.

On. A Japanese haiku contains 17 on, or sounds. On are counted differently than syllables in English, which leads to translators' lack of consensus on whether 17 English syllables truly captures the spirit of haiku.

Kigo. Traditional haiku contains a kigo, a word or phrase that places it in a particular season. Signaling a season with only one word lends haiku its economy of expression. Some of the most classic kigo are sakura (cherry blossoms) for spring; fuji (Wisteria) for summer; tsuki (moon) for fall; and samushi (cold) for winter.

Kireji. Known in English as the "cutting word," kireji creates a pause or a break in the rhythm of the poem. The kireji is often deployed to juxtapose two images. Contemporary haiku may not always use a kireji, but juxtaposition remains a common feature of haiku.

Haiku how to

How to Write a Haiku Poem in 4 Easy Steps

1. Decide what kind of haiku you'd like to write. You can choose to follow the 5-7-5 syllable style, or decide you want to be more experimental with your structure and adjust the number of syllables. If you're writing an English haiku, you'll separate your poem into three lines.

2. Determine your subject matter. Pay attention to small details around you. Nature themes are most common in haiku, so start to notice things like birds or leaves outside, the way the air feels, or even a smell in the air. Many haiku are about very simple natural elements of day-to-day life.

3. Use short phrases that evoke strong images. Think of how Japanese poets use *kigo*, and choose images that symbolize a season (say, fallen leaves for fall or daffodils for spring) to set a mood with very few words.

4. Use a *kireji* or "cutting word" to create a break in the meter. Remember to use punctuation in conjunction with a *kireji* to control the rhythm of the poem.

Haiku how to

Matsuo Bashō is widely regarded as the master of the art form. Read through a few of Matsuo Bashō's most popular poems, which perfectly marry the elements of haiku. Pay special attention to the last lines of the haikus.

An old pond!
A frog jumps in –
The sound of water.

A caterpillar,
this deep in fall –
still not a butterfly.

The first fallen snow
is barely enough to bend
the jonquil leaves

Haiku how to

Katie Nolan, a local Kemptville author, has been writing daily Haiku poetry, inspired by the COVID-19 pandemic. You can check out her daily haiku on her Facebook page, @katienuanauthor or #dailycovidhaiku.

Safety precautions;
Slight depression. Different cause.
Same basic actions

Changing the channel
2020 is no more
Though plot threads remain

To those drained from care
Who still have kindness in you
You are seen, admired

Haiku how to

practice

5 syllables

7 syllables

5 syllables

5 syllables

7 syllables

5 syllables

5 syllables

7 syllables

5 syllables

Share your haiku with us via email, Facebook, twitter,
or pair it with an image on Instagram!