



Lesson: Creating a Haiku

OVERVIEW

Through All Things by Stephen Paulus was inspired by poetry; his lyrics were drawn from the Wordsworth poem, "Tintern Abbey." Students will write their own reflective/meditative poems using the haiku form. These poems could eventually become the text for an original composition. (See the Lesson for Creating a Sound Painting in the Creating Music folder of this curriculum.)

LEARNING GOAL

Students will write a reflective poem about a place important to them using haiku form. Writing poems within a framework will enhance understanding of phrasing and text.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- Samples of existing haiku
- Paper and pencils

BACKGROUND

Haiku is an ancient form of poetry from Japan, often about nature and the seasons. The haiku form we know today was formalized in the late 19th century as a three-line poem with a 5-7-5 pattern of syllables across the three lines. Haiku written by students in the United States typically follows this syllabic pattern. However, the Japanese classical haiku masters were never strictly bound by the 5-7-5 pattern.

Here are examples of classic haiku by Japanese poet Matsuo Basho (1644-1694).

An old silent pond...
A frog jumps into the pond,
splash! Silence again.

Temple bells die out.
The fragrant blossoms remain.
A perfect evening!

Western poets also write haiku. Late in life, African American author, Richard Wright, embraced the discipline of haiku and wrote over 4,000. Learn more about Wright, (the highly acclaimed author of *Black Boy* and *Native Son*) at <http://www.terebess.hu/english/haiku/wright.html>.

PROCESS

This project should come after students have completed a word study of the text of *Through All Things*. It is important that they understand that Wordsworth was writing about an important place in the natural world, his recollections of that place as an older and wiser person, his sense of the positive force of the natural world, and the awe he felt.

NOTE: Choral Directors can consider enlisting the students' Language Arts teachers for support with this project as well as working with the text to *Through All Things*.

1. Tell students that the BIG IDEAS in Wordsworth's poetry used by Paulus are important thoughts for everyone to consider and poetry writing is one way to express those thoughts and feelings.
2. Ask students to share their prior knowledge about poetry writing and experience, especially in haiku form.
3. Examine a haiku written on the board. Make sure it follows the 5-7-5 syllable pattern.
 - Ask for individual readers or read as a group. Encourage expressive voices.
 - Ask students to count the number of syllables in each line (5-7-5) and write the numbers beside each line.
 - Open to a discussion about what the poem's subject and details they "saw" through the words.
 - Compare this haiku with a small section of text from "Through All Things." What do students notice? What similarities? Differences?
4. Read another haiku from the board and ask these questions.
 - What do you notice about this poem?
 - Is it about a place? Something in the natural world? The human-made world?
 - Does it follow the 5-7-5 pattern? (Count the syllables together.)
5. In addition to the pattern of syllables, creating haiku requires one more thing – the "twist" or "cutting." The twist is the change in the subject of the haiku – there is a slight difference in viewpoint or perspective, or in substance. But both parts of the haiku relate to each other. The twist or cut can come after the first or second line. A colon, dash, or period is used to show its place. Look at the two poems on the board and note where the twist or cutting is located. Read the poems again with a slight emphasis or pause at the cutting.
6. Working with a partner, students will write a haiku that is linked to one of the Big Ideas in "Tintern Abbey".

Reminders for students:

- The form must be a 5-7-5 syllable pattern for the three lines
 - The natural world and a special place should be the focus of their poem.
 - To remember the twist, or cutting.
7. Ask pairs of students to join with other pairs to form groups of six students for sharing their poems. Reconvene the choir and ask for volunteers to read some of the haiku out loud.
 8. Display student work on the board or wall.