

A Barefoot Lesson Idea

Skip through the Seasons Haikus

A BAREFOOT LITERACY LESSON FOR AGES 8 – 10

Haikus are classical Japanese poems. They should leave a picture in your head and are, typically, about the passing seasons. If you can write Japanese, the calligraphy should make a visual image too, as well as the words evoking a mental landscape. For this reason the haiku has a strong structure. The first line should be five syllables long, the second, seven, and the last line should be five syllables to echo and mirror the first line. Writing a haiku is great fun, but is not as easy as it seems!

WHAT TO DO

1. Talk to the children about syllables. Make sure they understand what a syllable is and that it is distinct from a phoneme.
2. Talk to the children about the different seasons and their characteristics and reference points.
3. Read *Skip through the Seasons*, making sure the children can see the pictures. As you read, linger on the verbs.
4. **Brainstorm 1:** Now break the children up into groups or pairs so they can talk among themselves and work together. Give each group or pair some pictures from magazines or printed from the internet and ask them to put the pictures into four different piles for the four different seasons. (They might choose a boat on the sea for Summer, or a falling leaf for Autumn). Bring the class back together for the groups to share what they have done.
5. **Brainstorm 2:** On a flipchart or whiteboard screen, have four season-sections to fill in. This time, the children are going to think of adjectives and adjectival phrases that fit in each season. Try and aim for the unusual, not the clichéd. Use vocabulary from the book, eg. *soft sand, sweep, swirl, glistens...*
6. Now the children are going to use the pictures they've chosen and the words you've brainstormed to write their own haiku about just one seasonal image.
7. **CONCLUSION:** Gather the children together to read their haikus to each other. Was it easy? Is the syllable count exactly right? Who has thought of an original image that sums up a season? Try and avoid the obvious; don't just use snowy images for winter!
8. **Extension:** Look at some Japanese haikus and the calligraphy that makes a picture too. Make some paper and use the home-made paper to write haiku banners. You could use real ink and a dipping pen and try and use your writing to enhance the haiku. Decorate your haiku banner.



Skip through the Seasons

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