

Haiku in the Garden

Pre-/Post-Visit Activities



TEACHER GUIDE

Thank you for registering for the GreenSchool Workshop *Haiku in the Garden*. Haiku poetry is a traditional form of Japanese poetry that is recognized by its lyric form of 17 syllables in three lines. Traditional haikus state or imply a season and refer to natural images and landscapes. During this workshop, your students will make scientific observations in the Garden to find out how plants have inspired generations of poets in all countries and of all traditions. The following selection of pre- and post-visit activity ideas and recommended resources is designed to support 3rd–5th grade classroom integration of the concepts addressed in *Haiku in the Garden*.

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

Natsume Soseki (1275-1351)

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY IDEAS

Looking With Your Fingers

Students strengthen their tactile awareness by using their sense of touch to make observations about a series of mystery objects.

Materials:

- selection of natural objects
- bag or box with small opening

Place a “mystery” object (such as a leaf, rock, nut, etc.) into the container. It is important that your students do not know what is in the container so that their observations are authentic. Pass this container around your class, and instruct the students to place their hand inside and—using only their sense of touch—to share one observation about the mystery object

with their fellow students. Explain that they can describe characteristics such as weight, size, texture, and any other physical traits that they notice (such as bumps or sections). They should close their eyes to allow for further tactile concentration. Repeat this exercise several times with different objects, and have your students compare and contrast these experiences. This exercise can also be done in small groups.

What Am I?

Students practice using descriptive language by writing riddles about mystery objects.

Materials:

- selection of natural objects
- paper
- pencils

Students should select a common natural object to describe, without telling any of their classmates what it is. They should then spend some time observing and recording the physical properties of this object, such as color, shape, size, or any other notable characteristics. These observations should be used to form a riddle in which each characteristic forms a clue for someone else to guess what the object in question is. For example, if writing about an apple, the riddle could include clues such as: “I am round. I am red. I grow on a tree. I am sweet. What am I?”

Have students share these riddles in small groups. Alternately, have them read the riddles in front of the class so that everyone can guess the “mystery” objects together.

POST-VISIT ACTIVITY IDEAS

Create a Zen Garden

Students draw from their acquired knowledge of Japanese traditions to design their own Zen Garden.

Materials:

- Small, colorful paper plates
 - salt or sand
 - forks
 - small stones or dried beans
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Zen Gardens, also known as *karesansui* or Japanese rock gardens, are traditionally composed of sand, rocks, and other natural elements. The sea is represented by raked patterns in the sand, meant to look like rippling water. Plants are typically not included in traditional Zen Gardens. The *kareansui* gardens, and the act of raking them, are meant to evoke tranquility and contemplation. The garden offers a wonderful opportunity to inspire a new haiku poem.

- Fill the paper plate with salt or sand.
- Use a fork to rake in a pleasing pattern.
- Add stones or beans for accents.
- Reflect on your next haiku poem.

Paint a Japanese Landscape

Students deepen their understanding of Japanese plants and artistic traditions by painting a watercolor image of a Japanese landscape.

Materials:

- watercolor paints
 - watercolor paper
 - paper cups
 - water
 - students' haiku poems from the GreenSchool workshop
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Nature has long been an important source of inspiration for many Japanese traditions and forms of artistic expression. Watercolors are often used to convey the textures and seasonal colors of the nearby landscapes. The nature of the watercolor medium encourages long, fluid brush strokes with as few brush strokes as possible.

• Encourage students to share what they remember about the *Kiku* exhibit that they explored at the Garden. *How were these plants different from other flowers and trees that they have seen before? How did the Kiku exhibit reflect Japanese culture?*

- In this activity, students will try to re-create the original nature scene that inspired their haiku poem by creating a watercolor painting.
- Fill the paper cups one-quarter of the way with water.
- Distribute the watercolor paper, paints, and brushes.
- Have students re-read their haiku poem.
- Guide and encourage students as they paint a landscape scene or *kiku* flower based on their haiku poems and their visit to the *Kiku* exhibit.

Please see the recommended resources below for more detailed information about watercolor techniques.

RECOMMENDED TEACHER RESOURCES

Graves, Donald H. *A Fresh Look at Writing*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heineman, 1994.

Johnson, Kathy. *Painting Watercolors (First Step Series)*. Ohio: F&W Publications, Inc., 1995.

Routman, Regie. *Invitations: Changing as Teachers and Learners K-12*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heineman, 1994.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Heinrichs, Ann. *A True Book: Japan Connecticut*. Children's Press, 1997.

Say, Allen. *Under the Cherry Blossom Tree: An Old Japanese Tale Retold by Allen Say*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974.

Wells, Ruth, and Yoshi. *A to Zen: A Book of Japanese Culture*. New York: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1992.

For more information, call the Manager of School Programs at 718.817.8124.