



# THE 39th ANNUAL ARIZONA MATSURI 2023

Saturday & Sunday, February 25-26, 2023  
Steele Indian School Park 300 E Indian School Rd., Phoenix, AZ

---

## ***HAIKU Reference Guide & Lesson Plans***

### BACKGROUND

In the spirit of raising awareness of the arts and culture of Japan to the people of Arizona, we challenge you to write your own Arizona-inspired HAIKU.

### HAIKU DEFINITION

Haiku is an ancient unrhymed Japanese verse form. Generally written in three short lines containing a total of 10 to 17 syllables to convey a vivid message, Haiku typically contain a reference to nature. Haiku uses simple concrete images of things we can see, smell, taste, touch, or feel. The best haiku poems reveal the essence of a thing so clearly that the reader can experience the momentary scene or insight that inspired the author.

One of the greatest Haiku poets was the Samurai, Basho (1644-94). Basho's father was also a Samurai from the Iga province. To become a Samurai, Basho served a local lord who was fond of writing. Basho learned the style of writing Haiku, and wrote under the name, Sobo. During those years, Basho traveled throughout Japan writing and further developing the Haiku style. A few samples of Basho's haiku style are listed in the example section below.

Your poem should contain a sentence fragment (one line) and a phrase (two lines that complete a thought). The fragment can be either the first line or the third line. To keep your poem simple and direct, write in the present tense. Haiku typically do not make use of capitalization, punctuation, or titles.

Each traditional Haiku should contain a reference to a season, which indicates what season of the year the Haiku is set. For example, blossoms would indicate spring, snow would give the idea of winter and mosquitos would imply summertime. The seasonal word is not always that obvious, you might need to consider the theme of the poem to find it.

Structural Rules for traditional Haiku:

- Use exactly 17 syllables
- Avoid similes and metaphors
- Syllables are arranged in three lines of 5-7-5
- Refers to a season of the year

Clouds appear and bring  
to men a chance to rest from  
looking at the moon



# THE 39th ANNUAL ARIZONA MATSURI 2023

Saturday & Sunday, February 25-26, 2023  
Steele Indian School Park 300 E Indian School Rd., Phoenix, AZ

The seasonal word in this Haiku is clouds, indicating the rainy season. Haiku poems are valued for their simplicity, openness, depth and lightness.

English-language haiku have generally followed the form of five syllables used in the first line, followed by seven syllables for the middle line and five syllables for the third.

However, English-language haiku no longer adhere to this syllable count, and are therefore as brief as the poem needs to be while keeping to the fragment-phrase structure. In English language haiku, the middle line is typically longer than the first or third lines.

## HAIKU EXAMPLES

an old silent pond a frog jumps into the pond splash, silence again  <i>M. Basho</i>	古池や 蛙飛び込む 水の音  松尾 芭蕉	over the wintry forest winds howl in rage with no leaves to blow  <i>N. Soseki</i>
In the twilight rain these brilliant-hued hibiscus a lovely sunset  <i>M. Basho</i>	empty house echoes of laughter in the rotting wood  <i>E. Onyan</i>	shifting shadows deep in the hills a dog barks  <i>A. McCrossen</i>
a crow has settled on a bare branch autumn evening  <i>M. Basho</i>	summer breeze the flutter of clothes thrown over a chair  <i>L. Santiago</i>	howling monsoon winds dust devil coming my way western dreamy draw  <i>J. Sachen</i>
lost in the woods only the sound of a leaf falling on my hat  <i>T. Kikusha</i>	toward those short trees we saw a hawk descending on a day in spring  <i>M. Shiki</i>	vibrant hues on green this Arizona cactus red flower unfurls  <i>Linda</i>

We challenge you to write your own Arizona-inspired HAIKU and submit it to Arizona Matsuri Haiku event. Refer to **Submission Guidelines** and **Terms and Condition** participation details at [www.azmatsuri.org](http://www.azmatsuri.org)



# THE 39th ANNUAL ARIZONA MATSURI 2023

Saturday & Sunday, February 25-26, 2023  
Steele Indian School Park 300 E Indian School Rd., Phoenix, AZ

---

## Haiku: Lesson Plan for teachers, grades 1-5

**Read sample poems aloud.** See attached sheet of “Haiku Reference Guide” and read aloud the example Haiku poems. Let the students absorb the poems without much introduction or explanation. Read slowly and leave space between poems. Missing one word can mean missing the entire poem.

**Ask the students what they noticed about the poems.** Which poems did they like best? Why? Ask how they felt when they heard specific poems. For example, did they feel surprised by the frog about to belch a cloud? Or did they feel lonely when they heard the poem about a crow on a bare branch? Were they excited by the ticket to a ballgame tucked in the math book?

**Talk about images.** Ask the students if they know what the word “image” means. They may offer something like “pictures with words.” Point out that images can involve all of the senses. Images can come from experience in the present moment (for example, a pen on their desk or a bird outside the classroom window) or from memory or imagination. Images can make us feel emotions. Instead of saying, “how we feel by **the** images we choose” in a poem, we can show how we feel by which images we choose to include.

**Take an “Image Journey.”** Have the students imagine they are at the beach (or in the woods, on a desert mountain, etc...). Ask what they see, what they hear, what they smell, etc... If they can remember a specific moment on a particular day, this will help add detail to their images. Write their words on the board and point out that these are images. Ask them to also think of images that show us what season it is. For example, “a hole in my sweater” tells us it is cold outside and probably winter. Remind the students to be specific and use as many different senses as they can!

**Have students try writing poems.** Ask the students to select words from among the images to form poems. For example, a child might write the following while doing the above brainstorming exercise: “I see roadrunner tracks all over the dry desert floor. I smell dusty air. My feet are hot. The city park is deserted because it is summer.” Ask which words are most important and most interesting. We can leave out some words, such as, “I see” and “I smell,” and write a poem something like this:

roadrunner tracks  
crossing the dry desert floor  
my hot feet are bare

In the above example, the words “deserted park” and “dusty air” are also good sensory words, but the poem would be too cluttered if we tried to include everything in one poem. The job of a poet is to select from everything around us just the few things that make the most powerful poem. Instead of trying to fit too much into one poem, write more poems!



# THE 39th ANNUAL ARIZONA MATSURI 2023

Saturday & Sunday, February 25-26, 2023  
Steele Indian School Park 300 E Indian School Rd., Phoenix, AZ

**Have the students share their work.** Have students say what they liked about their classmates' poems. Keep the comments positive and encourage them to submit their Haiku to the Arizona Matsuri Haiku event. Refer to **Submission Guidelines** and **Terms and Condition** participation details at [www.azmatsuri.org](http://www.azmatsuri.org)

## Haiku: Lesson plan for teachers, grades 6 -12

**Read aloud sample poems.** Attached is a selection of various Haiku written by poets from Japan and across the United States, including a few from Arizona. If possible, project the poems and have the students take turns reading poems out loud. Read slowly!

**Ask the students what they notice about the poems.** What characteristics or common features do they see? List these common features on the board as the students say them. Fill in any additional features so there will be a list for later use. The list might look like this:

- Short:** Haiku are very short poems! They are usually written in three (or fewer) lines. Haiku can be written in the traditional pattern of 5-7-5 syllables but they do not have to be. Most haiku in English have fewer than 17 syllables.

- One moment in time:** Haiku generally describe one brief moment in time. For example, “one tombstone with a crow” tells us only about the moment of noticing the crow; we do not need to know what happened before or after.

- Images:** The poems contain sensory images (not only visual, but involving other senses as well). For example, “echoes of laughter” and “metallic taste.”

- Seasonal references:** You can often tell what season it is by the references in the poem. For example, “the coarse wool of my blanket” tells us it is probably winter.

- Everyday language:** Haiku generally contain common everyday words. Nothing fancy or complicated!

- Surprise:** There is often a break or shift in the poem which creates a moment of surprise or sudden awareness. This is often called the “aha” moment.

**Brainstorm for ideas before writing complete haiku.** This step can be done individually by each student or as a group exercise on the board. Ideally, images can be collected by taking notes “on location” at an art exhibit or outdoors, but it can also be done in the classroom. Ask students what they saw, heard, felt, etc... at a particular moment in time at a specific place. By making a list of images, emotional responses, and seasonal references, there is no pressure at this point to produce complete poems. Let the ideas flow.



THE 39th ANNUAL  
ARIZONA MATSURI 2023

Saturday & Sunday, February 25-26, 2023  
Steele Indian School Park 300 E Indian School Rd., Phoenix, AZ

---

**Write haiku.** Have students choose words and phrases from among the images, emotional responses, and seasonal references to create haiku. Encourage students to write several poems and **read aloud** any they feel comfortable sharing. Provide positive feedback and encouragement.

**Have the students share their work.** Encourage students to submit their Haiku to the Arizona Matsuri Haiku event. Refer to **Submission Guidelines** and **Terms and Conditions** participation details at [www.azmatsuri.org](http://www.azmatsuri.org)