**The Haiku**

*The haiku is a very structured poetry form. Initially introduced by the Japanese, they are three-lined poems containing five syllables in the first line, seven in the second, and five in the third. Containing just seventeen syllables, the haiku cannot capture a "big picture." One depicts in them tiny images of incredible beauty, something glorious that might be missed if the writer had not taken the time to point it out. In a haiku one may depict a drop of water on a leaf reflecting early morning light, the smell of the evening dew, the answer of one bird to another's call, the persistence of a flower pushing its way through the cracks in the pavement to touch the sky. A haiku is about serenity and peace. It is getting in touch with nature; it feels like a walk in the woods.*

Article by Glori Chaika Copyright© 1998, 2015 Education World®

**Examples of Haiku:**

Fallen sick on a journey

In dreams I run wildly

Over a withered moor

*by Matsuo Basho (1644-1694)*

The first snow! Enough to bend the leaves Of the jonquil low. *by Matsuo Basho (1644-1694)*

A giant firefly: that way, this way, that way, this -- and it passes by. *by Issa (1762-1826)*

First autumn morning: the mirror I stare into shows my father's face. *by Kijo Murakami (1865-1938)*

For love and for hate I swat a fly and offer it to an ant. *by Shiki (1867-1902)*

After killing a spider, how lonely I feel in the cold of night! *by Shiki (186 ?)*

**The Senryu**

*These poems share the same format as a haiku, but can be about any topic.*

**Examples of Senryu:**

The tears of a girl

With a crushed and broken heart

Hidden from her friends

*by Jeanne Jordan*

"Sleep" Completely motionless Discovering strange worlds Where no one bothers you *by Aaron Ryan*

A soft gentle touch Only a woman could give To the man she loves   
*by Samantha Keim*

Feelings flow freely Stress is gone, I can relax I find inner peace

*by Melissa McDowel*

**The Tanka**

*This is a five-lined poem about nature with syllables per line of five, seven, five, seven, seven.*

**Examples of Tanka:**

Outside the rain pours

Tapping against the window

Do you hear the sound?

It is like a melody

Softly it whispers to me

*by Samantha Keim*

A small green oval

Falling free and gracefully

Through the dark blue skies

Never seeing the tall tree

It once lived peacefully on *by*

*Jeanne Jord*

**What do you notice about Haiku Poetry?**

•**Short:** Haiku are very short poems! They are usually written in three lines. Haiku can be written in the traditional pattern of 5-7-5 syllables. 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.

•**Juxtaposition:** The strength of successful haiku often comes from placing one image next to another. Without explicit metaphor, haiku often elicit powerful reactions in the reader by use of juxtaposition. For example, “harvest moon” resonates with the image of coins in a homeless man’s cup. Placing the images of the moon and the coins in the same poem suggests a relationship between the two and sparks a response in the reader.

•**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.