



Teaching Poetry with the Seven Steps

The beauty of the Seven Steps is that once you have mastered them they can be applied to any creative text types, including poetry. Haiku poems are great as a starting point with any age group; try this activity and see how the Seven Steps can help you introduce and improve this form of poetry.

Action Activity

Start by introducing the concept of a Haiku: a Japanese poem of seventeen syllables, in three lines of five, seven, and five, traditionally evoking images of the natural world.

Display the following example of a Haiku poem on the board:

*A sunlit forest.
The endless sounds of chopping.
Busy parking lot.*
(Alex J.)

There are also lots of student samples on pages 2 and 3 or you could look at examples online. The following site is a great place to start: <http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-haiku-poems.html>.

Ask students to brainstorm ideas in groups and then write their own haiku.

Use the Seven Steps to improve students' haiku.

Step	Top Tip
Step 1: Plan for Success	When planning your haiku, brainstorm personal experiences (memories are okay) to produce haiku poems that are authentic and believable.
Step 3: Tightening Tension	Create a division somewhere in the poem, by focusing first on one thing, then on another to build tension.
Step 5: Show, Don't Tell	Create an emotional response in the reader by 'showing' them what caused your emotion, rather than 'telling' them about the emotion itself.
Step 6: Ban the Boring	Avoid rhymes, metaphors and similes – they are too abstract for a haiku.
Step 7: Exciting Endings	Create contrast and an Exciting Ending by focusing on something completely different in the third line and surprising the reader.

For more ideas on how to apply the Seven Steps to different types of text, become a *Seven Steps Online* member: www.sevenstepswriting.com/info-seven-steps-online/.

Student Samples

Here are some student samples from our recent Haiku competition:

*A small daisy grows
In amongst a field of weeds –
The light in the dark*
(Elsie)

*Birds fly gracefully;
Landing on soft arctic snow,
A land of pillows.*
(Aidan)

*Wildlife once roamed free,
Sadly, now trapped in cages,
Is it really right?*
(Tara)

*Smoke corrupts the sky.
Unbreathable oxygen.
How come we don't stop?*
(Jared)

*Polluting the sea,
No respect for the Pontos.
Oceanus is mad.*
(Darcy)

*The bright fiery sun,
It shines till an endless day,
A powerful force.*
(Lydia)

*A beautiful fire
A sizzle from the back room
Break, crash, bang, they fall*
(Kurtis)

*Our world is losing,
Fading before our own eyes,
Drooping, dying...gone.*
(Keira)

*The pretty ocean,
A place where rubbish is thrown,
Endless life dying.*
(Lena)

*Our world is dying,
Wonder turning to horror
In front of our eyes.*
(Amaya)

*Once a small crawler
Now an angel of the sky
Such a fragile life*
(Kaitlyn)

*The world, sickly pale
The wicked fumes, melting us
Choking on ourselves*
(Charles)

*Murky arms breaking
Depressed, withered and dying
Why does no one care?*
(Eloise)

*The icy land thrives
Moving figures hide from it
A creature of snow*
(Abhi)

*Endless pollution,
Recycle, reuse, reduce,
Make the world better.*
(Utsavi)

*Bees buzz around me
Making sweet golden honey
Sleepy bees now rest*
(Kobe)

*One pretty blue bird
Sitting in the old gum tree
Singing happily*
(Sophie)

*Bright blue colourful
Flying high in the blue sky
Singing lullabies*
(Isabella)

The Lake
*The lake gleams in peace
The calmness breaks its silence
Grey sludge swirls through dark*
(Clio)

A Disappearing Forest
*Silver metal gleams
The heavy blade splinters wood
Ground trembles with fear*
(Indigo)

Blue Sky
*The sunny blue sky
The fluffy white clouds floating
Lovely times are here*
(Kayla)

Deforestation
*Possums squeak with fright
Dull axes groan with hunger
The last leaf falls down*
(Nuala)

Forest
*Trees swaying gently
Stumps surrounding the last tree
Until a loud bang*
(Ruby H)

Surrender
*The silence shatters
Birds flee from shattering blades
The tree surrenders*
(Ruby P)

Forest
*Tall green canopy
Shining silver in the sun
Forest calm no more*
(Evie B)

Forests End
*Vast concrete cities
Built on a forest deathbed
The planet's downfall*
(Skyla)

City Waste
*Wasteful energy
City lights a glow at night
No stars to be seen*
(Monique)