

*The Writer's Notebook*  
*memories floating, black swoosh*  
*to washi, Haiku*

\*washi-Japanese paper

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**Title:** Writer's Notebook and Haiku

**Grade Appropriate:** All grade levels. Demonstrated within the context of ELL students at various academic language levels.

**Approximate length of time to complete lesson:** The writer's notebook sections can be completed separately within one class period (45 minutes). The haiku can be done within a larger poetry unit or within a class period.

**Objectives:**

- Create and refer back to a resource list of writing topics
- Sketch a "snapshot" or image in time.
- Build a vocabulary through selection of words and clearly articulates an image connecting to the words
- Compose and revise haiku

**Demonstration Outline**

1. Writer's Notebook
  - Writing Territories
  - "Mine Your Heart"
2. Haiku
  - What is it?
  - How can we use it?
  - Try it!

**Writer's Notebook**

If you are interested in using this technique, check out Nancie Atwell's book, *Lessons that Change Writers*, and Lucy Calkins' book, *The Art of Teaching Writing*. I have found the notebook to be a great tool for my dependent readers and writers – those who *really* struggle and hadn't written much until I used the notebook.

***Writing Territories***

This idea comes from Nancie Atwell's book. I have the students write the words "Writing Territories" at the top of their first writing page. We talk about the word "territory" and what it means. Then explain that we are going to write about things that are within our own area of knowledge. I hand out the "*In Collecting Your Writing Territories, Consider...*" worksheet and we talk through it. I have provided both one from Atwell's book and one I adapted because of language difficulties. I show them an example of what another student has written and then I ask them to write quietly for about 5-10 minutes. I then share my territories and invite them to write down anything more that might have been sparked from my list. I then have them work in pairs sharing their entire list with each other and adding to it. This always generates a long list that can be accessed later when they are having "writer's block." I invite students to share some of their list with the class.

### ***Mine Your Heart***

Again, this idea comes from Nancie Atwell's book. I have students draw a heart in their notebook and I hand out the *Questions to Help Mine Your Heart*. We discuss the word "mine" and we always come up with a number of other meanings before the word "digging" emerges. I explain that we are going to be digging into our heart and memories to think about what is most important to us. We go over the handout and the students get writing. I tell them to try to be a bit more specific in writing about a certain memory so they can easily refer back to it. For example, the computer is important for me for a number of reasons, but I don't have one memory that really sticks out. But if I were going to write about traveling in the Philippines, I would probably write about the rice paddies I visited with my friend Tina. I might even show a few examples before they got started. After about 5-10 minutes I would have them share with in pairs or a small group of 3 or 4, then invite students to share a few things with the whole class. What I let them know is that over the year they will probably want to add memories to their heart, both old and new, as they think of them.

### **Haiku**

#### ❖ ***What is Haiku?***

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry. Typically, it takes the form of a 5-7-5 syllable pattern. Haiku usually requires a poem be three lines with the middle line longer and totaling no more than 17 syllables. However, students should not get hung up on this detail: "Rather focus on simple imagery, without using similes, metaphors, and eloquent adjectives and adverbs. When crafting haiku, think of a group of words that present an observation in a way that appeals to the senses. Use the senses of sight, touch, sound, smell, taste, or sensations like pain or movement. Tell of a specific event or observation; do not write in general terms. Write in the present tense. Try to indicate the feelings of the poet as she/he is writing the poem. When describing an event, present it as an image" (<http://www.gardendigest.com/poetry/haiku4.htm>).

#### ❖ ***How can we use it?***

Because Haiku demands few words, it is in the reach of all levels. For low-level students, simple words can convey their ideas. For higher-level students, really push them to think about word choice. Because it elicits syllable counting, it is a great project to work with in the ELL or elementary classroom.

Haiku is most often used in context with nature. However, with the adaptation being made in languages around the world, you can write Haiku with any focus. Try using it for science to describe an experiment, for social studies to describe an event or landscape, for health to detail what a certain part of the body does, for math to write a number riddle. Or use it at the end of the hour and have students write about something learned in class that day.

You may put this in a larger unit like a poetry unit or a Haiku unit. It could also be used for one period, by having the students go outside and observe using their senses and return to write about it. It could be extended over the year, by having students observe the changing seasons and writing Haiku to express the seasons. Teachers can have students use the environment around them or draw from a book, picture or postcard, memory, or the activity of Writing Territories/Mine Your Heart.

❖ *Try it!*

Choose a memory from your Writing Territories or Mine Your Heart – it may be liked to nature or not. First, visualize the memory for about 30 seconds. Quickly sketch that memory. As you sketch, think of a specific moment in that memory. For example, my memory of the rice fields in the Philippines is quite broad. However, I could narrow this memory down to the moment I looked out and saw the multi-level rice paddies and the green color of the fields. Write your haiku.

December drizzle  
tender emerald sprigs stretch  
curved steps for giants

The following is **NOT** haiku:

I watched the rain  
Drops as they splattered  
Into the puddle.

As written by a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student, the same sentiment is expressed as haiku:

Soft warm splatterings  
echoing in circles  
settle in the puddle.

Here are some examples written by students from around the world:

Mr. Ant,  
Do you mind if I set you  
On my leaf boat?  
-Norimasa Oikawa, Japan, Gr. 1

Traversing the web  
The clear shining moon keeps the spider  
awake  
-Jose Juan Tablada, Mexico

Where I buried  
The little bird, only there  
The ground bumps up.  
-Norikako Miyashita, Japan, Gr. 6

a hawk circling  
the ruins of the Incas  
just stones  
-Yoichi Iwata, Brazil

Under the moon  
just the little willow leaves  
shedding their own light  
-Aleksandar Nejgebauer, Yugoslavia

A snowman  
Turned into a shield  
Snowball fight  
-Tooru Usui, Japan, Gr. 5

the potato thieves  
exclaim in low voices  
at the falling star  
-Dee Everts, England

A little girl stands  
Holding her finger out and  
A butterfly comes  
-Reuven Freesman, Canada, Gr. 6

**Learning to Drive**  
Yellow lines white lines  
It shouldn't be quite so hard  
To stay in between  
-College student

### **Text Resources**

- *Lessons that Change Writers* by Nancie Atwell
- *The Art of Teaching Writing* by Lucy McCormick Calkins
- *Fat Polka-dot Cat and Other Haiku* by Betsy Maestro
- *One Leaf Rides the Wind* by Celeste Davidson Mannis
- *Wind in the Long Grass* by William Higgins
- *In a Spring Garden* by Richard Lewis
- *Flower Moon Snow* by Kazue Mizumura
- *Cool Melons – Turn to Frogs! The Life and Poems of Issa* by Matthew Gollub
- *Stone Bench in an Empty Park* by Paul Janeczko

### **Internet Resources**

- The History and Artistry of Haiku, <http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/Digests/haiku.html>
- Haiku lesson plan for elementary grades, <http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/LP/LS3.html>
- Haiku writing worksheet for K-8, <http://www.worddance.com/magazine/worksheet.html>
- \*Teaching Haiku Poetry for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade through college level (this site breaks its lesson plans into every grade level, and has numerous links to follow for learning more about the history, guidelines, bibliographies, etc.), <http://www.gardendigest.com/poetry/haiku4.htm>
- Haiku of the Day and a lesson plan for each, <http://newscurrents.com/zino/>

### **Notes to Self/Reflection:**