

Poetry Starters

SENYRU

Senyru is a 3 lined Japanese poem that uses more general subjects than Haiku. It is not restricted to 17 syllables either. Here is an example:

Fog is a misty kind of a thing
It swirls through the trees
And usually sleeps on the lake.

TANKA

A **tanka** is quite similar to Japanese haiku, but consists of a total of 31 syllables distributed as follows:

Line 1: 5 syllables
Line 2: 7 syllables
Line 3: 5 syllables
Line 4: 7 syllables
Line 5: 7 syllables

They are usually written with nature or mood in mind. Here is an example:

The birds are chirping
Quietly in the forest
Watching for some worms
To appear after the rain
Oh, so patiently they wait.

Poetry Starters

A **lantern** is a light and airy Japanese poem that follows a syllabic pattern as follows:

Line 1: one syllable (noun)

Line 2: two syllables (describing noun)

Line 3: three syllables (describing noun)

Line 4: four syllables (describing noun)

Line 5: one syllable (another word for the noun in line one)

They may be written in the shape of a Japanese lantern.

Here is an example:

boys
tackling
running fast
scoring touchdowns
lads

Chain lanterns are simply groups of lantern poems that are joined together. The pattern of syllables is the same (1,2,3,4,1) and the chain should be at least three verses long. Some chains are longer! In this case, the first and last lines need not be synonyms. Here is an example:

Some
little
kitten purrs
gently by the
fire.

Sleep
comes quite
easily
to a drowsy
one.

Soon
she will
be dreaming
of a big fat
mouse!

Poetry Starters

A **sijo** is a poem with a specific pattern of syllables. They are as follows:

Six lines

six to eight syllables in each line

forty-two to forty-eight syllables in all

Here is an example:

Many boats are in the harbor

On this bright and sunny day!

Waiting for a crew to arrive

To prepare them for a run

Sails will be billowing

Wind will carry them all away.