

THE RIVER IS FLOWING LIKE JAVA

Goal: To spark students' interest in writing poems.

Objectives: Students will...

- Express their individual style and creativity through the construction of a poem
- Become familiar with different types of poetry

Time Required: Two 45-60 minute periods

Standards Met: LA4, LA5, LA6, LA9, LA11, LA12

Materials (For class of 30 students):

- Colored construction paper
- Markers, colored pencils
- Coffee Maker
- Coffee cake/pastries
- Beatnik costumes supplied by students
- Class set of the poem *Rivers of Canada*
- Class set of Student Sheets

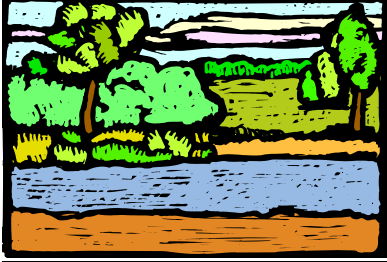
Procedure:

Day 1

- Start class wearing a classic beatnik costume.
- Explain to the students the history behind the beatnik movement. Show some video (YouTube) or pictures for illustrations.
- Recite a poem about rivers (located on the Student Sheet) - for the enjoyment of the class (try to be outlandish and exciting).
- Tell the students that their assignment is to write a creative and original poem. Rivers should be a central theme to all of the poems, but allow students some freedom in how they choose to include them.
- Students will have to decide what type of poem they would like to write. This could be a haiku, tanka, free-form, etc.
- Introduce the students to all of their poetry options (see examples).
- Pass out a piece of colored construction paper and some colored pencils to each student.
- Students should write their poem on the construction paper and decorate the sheet however they choose.

Day 2

- Set up the classroom in a coffee-house manner. "Coffee" (Hot Chocolate) and pastry could be provided to the students, and all students should have a "beatnik" costume to wear.
- Students will then recite their poems as they see fit. Encourage dramatic, comedic, and original recitals. The poems may then be displayed in the classroom or the hallway.



THE RIVER IS FLOWING LIKE JAVA – Student Sheet

Bliss Carman (1861-1929)

Rivers of Canada

1 O all the little rivers that run to Hudson's Bay,
2 They call me and call me to follow them away.
3 Missinaibi, Abitibi, Little Current--where they run
4 Dancing and sparkling I see them in the sun.
5 I hear the brawling rapid, the thunder of the fall,
6 And when I think upon them I cannot stay at all.
7 At the far end of the carry, where the wilderness begins,
8 Set me down with my canoe-load--and forgiveness of my sins.
9 O all the mighty rivers beneath the Polar Star,
10 They call me and call me to follow them afar.
11 Peace and Athabasca and Coppermine and Slave,
12 And Yukon and Mackenzie--the highroads of the brave.
13 Saskatchewan, Assiniboine, the Bow and the Qu'Appelle,
14 And many a prairie river whose name is like a spell.
15 They rumor through the twilight at the edge of the unknown,
16 "There's a message waiting for you, and a kingdom all your own.
17 "The wilderness shall feed you, her gleam shall be your guide.
18 Come out from desolations, our path of hope is wide."
19 O all the headlong rivers that hurry to the West,
20 They call me and lure me with the joy of their unrest.
21 Columbia and Fraser and Bear and Kootenay,
22 I love their fearless reaches where winds untarnished play--
23 The rush of glacial water across the pebbly bar
24 To polished pools of azure where the hidden boulders are.
25 Just there, with heaven smiling, any morning I would be,
26 Where all the silver rivers go racing to the sea.
27 O well remembered rivers that sing of long ago,

28 Ajourneying through summer or dreaming under snow.
29 Among their meadow islands through placid days they glide,
30 And where the peaceful orchards are diked against the tide.
31 Tobique and Madawaska and shining Gaspereaux,
32 St. Croix and Nashwaak and St. John whose haunts I used to know.
33 And all the pleasant rivers that seek the Fundy foam,
34 They call me and call me to follow them home.

Notes

1] Hudson's Bay: inland sea jutting into northeastern Canada and joined to the Arctic Ocean and the north Atlantic.

3] Missinaibi: Ontario river flowing north into Moose Lake and James Bay.

Abitibi: river from Abitibi Lake to James Bay in northern Ontario.

Little Current: northern Ontario river running into Albany River that drains into James Bay.

11] Peace: a tributary of the Mackenzie River flowing from Williston Lake, British Columbia, through the Rockies and northern Alberta into the Slave River.

Athabasca: river flowing from the Columbia icefield into Lake Athabaska.

Coppermine: river flowing from Lac de Gras in the North West Territories to the Arctic Ocean.

Slave: river flowing from the Peace River into Great Slave Lake.

12] Yukon: river flowing from northern British Columbia into Alaska and the Bering Sea.

Mackenzie: North America's second longest river, flowing from Great Slave Lake north to the Beaufort Sea.

13] Saskatchewan: river that drains much of the Canadian prairies and flowing from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, to Cedar Lake, Manitoba.

Assiniboine: river flowing across Saskatchewan and Manitoba to the Red River in Winnipeg.

Bow: river flowing from Bow Lake in Banff National Park into the Oldman River at Calgary, Alberta.

Qu'Appelle: northern Saskatchewan river, named ("who calls?") after a Cree legend of a youth who heard a voice call his name and later discovered it was that of his bride-to-be at the moment of her death.

21] Columbia: river flowing from Columbia Lake in British Columbia to Portland, Oregon, and the Pacific.

Fraser: river flowing from Jasper National Park in the Rockies to the Strait of Georgia on the Pacific.

Bear: which river Carman has in mind here is not clear.

Kootenay: southwestern British Columbia river, flowing from the Rockies south and draining in the Columbia River.

31] Tobique: river in New Brunswick running into the St. John River.

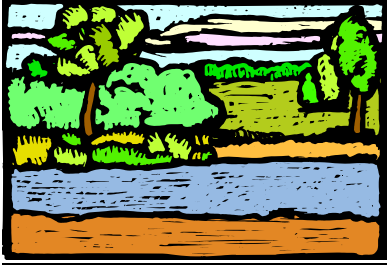
Madawaska: northern Maine river running into the St. John River in New Brunswick.
Gaspereaux: unidentified.

32] St. Croix: this river runs along the border between Maine and New Brunswick.

Nashwaak: New Brunswick River flowing into the St. John River.

St. John: this river flows from Maine to the Madawaska River at Edmundston, New Brunswick, and then south to Saint John and into the Bay of Fundy.

33] Fundy: Bay of Fundy, off Nova Scotia, and the source of some of the highest tides in the world.



Student Sheet-Types of Poetry

Types of Poetry

Japanese Poetry:

haiku (HI-COO)

It originally meant a verse taken from a *renga*, but in this century, it was coined by Shiki to be synonymous with *hokku*. From this came the idea that *haiku* had to have the elements of the *hokku*, a *kigo* and a *kireji*, but most important was the linking of images completely within the three lines without relying on connections with other elements to make a completed thought.

Three main rules for writing haiku, as explained on the [Haiku by Basho](#) and [Haiku for People!](#) websites:

- A haiku is a three-line poem in which the first line has five syllables, the second line seven syllables, and the final line five syllables. These syllable counts are strictly observed in Japanese but can be loosely observed when haiku are written in other languages. The [Haiku by Basho](#) website provides examples of haiku in transliterated Japanese and in English which illustrate this point. For example:

kirishigure
Fuji wo minu hi zo
omoshiroki

in the misty rain
Mount Fuji is veiled all day--
how intriguing

(From Makoto Ueda, *Basho and His Interpreters: Selected Hokku with Commentary* [Stanford University Press, 1991] p. 102.

- A haiku should contain a **kigo**, a word that gives the reader a clue to the season. The kigo anchors the haiku at a specific moment in time, setting the experience it describes in a poetic here and now. The kigo can be the name of the season (autumn, winter) or a subtler clue, such as a reference to the harvest or new fallen snow. Through the years, certain signs of the seasons have become conventional in Japanese haiku: cherry blossoms are a kigo for spring, mosquitoes a kigo for summer. Sometimes, too, the kigo may refer to a specific moment -- the dawn or moonrise -- without reference to a specific season.
- Finally, a haiku has two parts. The poem divides after the first or second line, so that it seems to make two separate statements that are related in some unexpected or implicit way. As Professor Haruo Shirane explains on the [Haiku by Basho](#) website, this structure "leaves the poem open for the reader to complete," creating "an open space which the reader...is supposed to enter into." The two-part structure can also make reading a haiku feel like discovering something hidden that suddenly becomes very clear. In Japanese, the dividing point between the two parts of a haiku is marked by what haiku poets call a "cutting word" (*kireji*). In English, the division is often marked with a colon, a dash, or an elipsis.

tanka (TAH'N-KAH)

short poem—Consisting of 31 *on* in five units of 5-7-5-7-7, this lyrical form has existed since earliest recorded Japanese literature. Along the way it has also been called *uta* or *waka*. In many ways it is like the first two stanza of a *renga* or is a *tan renga* written by one person.

For structure (5-7-5-7-7)

*Moon madness makes me
Dance in delight under stars
I lift up my hands
And feel my arms grow longer
As they wrap around the moon*
—Margaret Cheaseboro

*The blue heron cries
White capped waves search for the shore
We walk hand in hand
Finding gentle harmony
Shaping a life together*
—David Glass

A lone saxophone
Cries out on the street corner
Sweet, sweet intrusion!
Grim faced commuters rush past -
No time for amazing grace
—David Kirkland

For content and spirit

Expecting you
In the garden at dusk
I found a glowworm
In the soft earth - warm
And radiant, waiting too
—Sydney Bougy

Years on my own
I still stare after
A white-haired couple
The way his body
Shields her from the wind
—Thelma Mariano

Arabic Poetry: Ghazal!

The Bedouins of ancient Arabia and Persia made poetry a conversational art form. Several poetic forms developed from the participatory nature of tribal poetry. Today in most Arabic cultures, you may still experience public storytelling and spontaneous poetry challenges in the streets. The art of turning a rhyme into sly verbal sparring is considered a mark of intelligence and a badge of honor. The *ghazal* (pronounced "guzzle") is an intricate pre-Islamic poetic form that is thought to have developed through the practice of poetic challenges. It is a series of couplets, called *shers*, no more than a dozen or so, which are related, but not connecting in a narrative pattern.

This is what a *ghazal* looks like:

Couplet one:

_____rhyme A + refrain
_____rhyme A + refrain

Couplet Two, Three, & so on:

_____rhyme A + refrain

Other Examples:

Example A:

*I say That, after all, is the trick of it all
When suddenly you say "Arabic of it all."
For Shahid too the night went quickly as it came.
After that, O Friend, came the music of it all.*

Example B:

*What will suffice for a true love knot? Even the rain?
But he has bought grief's lottery, bought even the rain.
They've found the knife that killed you, but whose prints are these?
No one has such small hands, Shahid, not even the rain.*

Example C:

*Suspended in the garden, Time, bit by bit, shines-
As you lean over this page, late and alone, it shines.
Mark how Shahid returns your very words to you.
It's when the heart, still unbriefed, but briefly literature, shines.*

Example D:

*Where are you now? Who lies beneath your spell tonight
Before you agonize him in farewell tonight?
And I, Shahid, only am escaped to tell thee-
God sobs in my arms. Call me Ishmael tonight.*