

[One-hour Workshop]

Can You Haiku?

How 17th-century Japanese poetry help you communicate better on today's digital platforms

	<p>Ancient pond A frog leaps in Water's sound</p> <p>— <i>Bashō</i></p> <p>[Characters with spaces: 43]</p>
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Simply put, the haiku is a tweet. And a working knowledge of this popular Japanese art form can be a **solution to a common 21st-century solution communications problem: How to say more — effectively and in fewer words** by addressing a message's syllabic count. A writer who is thinking in haiku terms is already considering messaging at a cellular level.

What's a Haiku?

The popular English version of the haiku contains three lines: 5 syllables / 7 syllables / 5 syllables.

The classic haiku contains a duality of message (such as joy in the moment coupled with sadness at its transient nature). The poem attempts to answer three questions:

1. What? (the object, the action, e.g., falling leaf or petal, sound of water)
2. Where? (geography, e.g., house, garden, mountain)
3. When? (seasonal reference, e.g., spring, summer, winter, fall)

The haiku is now taught across the US in grammar schools.

<p>Animals are cute. Even the ones with rabies. This haiku is done. [Tweet count: 64]</p> <p>— Alice Stevenson, age 7</p>

Group Exercise: Distillation of message into its most basic syllabic pattern. Choose a headline, an article, a sentence from hard copies of the NYT, The Enquirer, assorted tabloids [to be provided]. Each participant will write a haiku [or two] and share with the group.

Example: [from 10 July 2017 New York Times article]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/10/opinion/thoreaus-invisible-neighbors-at-walden.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=region®ion=region&WT.nav=region>

Thoreau's 'Invisible' Neighbors at Walden (by John Kaag and Clancy Martin)

He stayed near Walden because it was here that he could be most free.

Walden was also

Close to his mother, who did

His laundry. For free.

[Tweet count: 101]

James W. Gaynor (aka #HaikuJim) is a poet, artist, editor, and writer. He is a regular columnist for *OTVmagazine*, where his haiku commentaries have a devoted following. Gaynor worked as an editor at Grosset & Dunlap, *Cuisine* magazine, *Scriptwriter News* and Forbes Publications. His articles, book reviews and essays have appeared in *The New York Observer*, and he recently retired as the Global Verbal Identity Leader for Ernst & Young LLP. Gaynor's most recent collection of poetry, *Everything Becomes a Poem*, was published in 2016 (Nemeton Press). His new book, *Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice in 61 Haiku (1,037 Syllables!)* will appear in September 2017.

