

Judging Criteria: Greater Dane County Haiku Project

- 1. Syllable Count** Line 1=5 syllables
 Line 2=7 syllables
 Line 3=5 syllables

For this program, at this grade level, we require strict adherence to the traditional syllable count. Of course it is possible to write nonsense with the right numbers of syllables in each line. Syllable count is a **critical** but not sufficient criteria.

2. Season/nature

Most haiku either use a seasonal word, use words that suggest the seasonal context, or describe season-specific activities, events, or scenes.

Snow	=winter
Colored Leaves	=fall
Thunderstorm	=summer
Growth	=spring

Winter *In late December*
I make a snow friend. We talk
Then, he melts away.
(Melissa Wendt, Evansville, '92)

Summer *Scorching afternoon*
The hovering dragonfly's
Shimmering shadow.
(Joelle Cahoon, Waterloo, '93)

Spring/Summer *I watch the raindrops*
Trickle down the window pane
And I think of the sun.
(Tyler Hurd, Belleville, '97)

3. Word Change

Some of the most effective haiku have a sudden, dramatic mood change. The result is that the reader often feels an emotional punch.

Happy flowers dance
On a warm summer evening
Before they are cut.
(Chris Loga, Monona Grove, '92)

*The dark rain covers
The town, fills me with sorrow.
Then a flower blooms.*
(Katherine Faulkner, Middleton-Cross Plains, '04)

4. Humor

Risibility is one of the defining characteristics of what it means to be human. Haiku humor is often whimsical – often subtle - often makes demands on the reader's knowledge or sense of incongruity.

*A small blue bread crumb
Waiting to be a sandwich
Sitting all alone.*
(Rachel Kronberger, Madison, '96)

*Someone new is here;
Things will never be the same.
It is a baby.*
(Andrea Visaver, Belleville, '01)

5. Issues Oriented

Some ten-year-old children are very conscious of the world around them. They are especially interested in relationships and their own place in the world.

*People all around.
I don't know anyone here.
I feel lonely.*
(Austin Kauth, Watertown, '92)

*I was very sad
When my parents got divorced.
I thought it was me.*
(Anneba Jackson, Ft. Atkinson, '92)

*Sweet loving grandpa,
The winter breeze reminds me
He played in the snow.*
(Hannah Vos, Middleton-Cross Plains, '04)

6. Poetic Devices

In writing poetry, several devices are available to lend spice to a poem: alliteration, onomatopoeia, metaphors, similes, and personification.

*Bridge of rain and sun
Colorful stripes of beauty
Silent sounds of light.
(Sabrina Wottreng, Elkhorn, '02)*

*Snow covers the ground
Like a blanket of white silk.
Then comes the shovel.
(Regina Hurley, Lodi, '96)*

*Friendship is special.
It is fragile, like snowflakes.
It makes me happy.
(Angela Kaplanek, Waterloo, '99)*

*The night sky is dark.
Shooting stars leave a bright path
A silver moon hangs.
(Rob Graylow, Sun Prairie, '98)*

*Summer showers splash
Wild flowers on the prairie
Look! A giant quilt!
(Jordan Karls, Lodi '98)*

*A rustle in the bush
A raccoon safe at last
Hiding behind his mask.
(Patrick Carroll, McFarland, '98)*

⇒ **Occasionally double entendre works:**

*Leaves dancing in air.
Like maidens running freely
Beware of the rakes.
(Shannon Homberg, Monona Grove, '92)*

⇒ **Clear images are welcome:**

*A reflecting pond.
Such clear water! Fish swim in
A reflected tree.*
(Megan Schuchardt, Monona Grove, '00)

⇒ **An uncommon look at a common thing:**

*A bright red wagon.
My oldest sister pulls me.
We talk on the way.*
(Stacy Grunnet, Belleville, '92)

*Hungry frogs like to
Rest on a lily pad and
Dream of careless flies.*
(Katie Schmitt, Sun Prairie, '00)

One thing teachers might try: suggest the students reverse the first and third line. Sometimes it works.

*The wild horse runs
Through the lengthy grass and weeds
Under the sunset.*
(Katherine Mullahy, Middleton-Cross Plains, '04)

Reverse the first and third lines:

*Under the sunset
Through the lengthy grass and weeds
The wild horse runs.*
(Katherine Mullahy, Middleton-Cross Plains, '04)

You try reversing one and three here:

*Love in a mom's eyes.
On the branch of the fern tree.
Feeding her child worms.*
(Ryan Hoven, Belleville, '04)

The idea behind the Greater Dane County Haiku Project is for teachers and students to have some serious fun. Serious writing skills are involved, but the context (a three-line poem) is fun. Enjoy.