

# Haiku composition

Primary: (ages 7 – 11)

Music

Students discuss the expressive qualities of timbre choice and movement levels, create sound effects and accompanying musical soundscapes to accompany a poem, choreograph appropriate movements and listen critically to evaluate compositions of other students.

**Time allocation** 2-3 lesson periods

**Subject content** Use timbre choice and movement for expression  
Experiment with timbres to create sound effects  
Create soundscapes to accompany text

**Creativity and critical thinking** This unit has a **creativity** and **critical thinking** focus:

- Critically listen to evaluate expression through dynamics, tempo, and soundscapes
- Reflect on and consider several perspectives on musical composition
- Play with unusual ideas when composing and performing

**Other skills** Communication, Collaboration

**Key words** timbre, poetry, soundscapes, melody, rhythm, coda, composition; emotions; tempo; dynamics

## Products and processes to assess

The use of movement helps make music more expressive. This activity challenges students to use movement in conjunction with sound effects and composed music in order to appropriately accompany the text of a poem, and to critically listen in order to evaluate the expressive choices of their peers. At the highest levels of achievement, their musical piece is imaginative, expressive, and shows a high level of personal features. The work process demonstrates a willingness to explore a variety of ideas and perspectives and the ability to see the connections between poetry and musical concepts, as well as an understanding of the strengths and limitations of compositions. The student reflects well on ideas and feedback of others and is able to implement this in their work processes and final product.

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## Teaching and Learning plan

This plan suggests potential steps for implementing the activity. Teachers can introduce as many modifications as they see fit to adapt the activity to their teaching context.

Step	Duration	Teacher and student roles	Subject content	Creativity and critical thinking
1	Lesson period 1	<p>Teacher puts various haiku (about 1 for every 5 students) around the room. Students walk around the room reading the haikus.</p> <p>Class returns to a group. Teacher reviews what makes a haiku (5 syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables). Teacher goes through the haikus and asks students to raise their hands when she mentions their favorite haiku. This will be used to break the students into small groups.</p> <p>In small groups (of about 5 students per group), students study each line of the poem and choose one word from each line that elicits a strong emotion or image.</p> <p>Each group decides on a large whole-group movement that helps show the meaning of each of the underlined words.</p> <p>Small groups practice saying the poem while using appropriate movements for applicable words.</p> <p>Teacher encourages students to use different levels of movements (low, medium, high) if they have not. Teacher prompts students to practice with the following questions in mind:            How will you all clearly begin each movement?            How long will it last?            How will you know the movement is over?</p> <p>Small groups share movements and the recitation of the poem with the remainder of the class. Students in the audience anonymously write down one thing they liked, and one thing they think could be improved for each group.</p>	<p>Thinking about expressing emotions through movements of different durations when preparing to compose</p> <p>Developing ensemble skills</p>	<p>Making connections between conceptual ideas of poems, emotions and movement</p> <p>Generating and playing with ideas for suitable movements</p> <p>Considering several perspectives and identifying strengths and limitations</p>

<p><b>2</b></p>	<p>Lesson period 2</p>	<p>Students receive written anonymous feedback from classmates from previous class.</p> <p>Students return to small groups to create a musical composition for the haiku. Some questions to pose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What timbres will you use?</li> <li>Will the composition be melodic, rhythmic, or both?</li> <li>Will the composition use the lyrics of the poem? If so, how?</li> <li>Will you have an intro? A coda?</li> <li>How will you musically show importance to the words you emphasized through movement?</li> <li>How will you divide parts so some people move and some people create the music? (Perhaps some groups will need to “borrow” people from other groups for performances.)</li> <li>What choices could you make that would be unusual or radical?</li> </ul> <p>Students share their performances with the remainder of the class. Students in the audience anonymously write down one thing they liked, and one thing they think could be improved for each group.</p>	<p>Composing music with expressive qualities</p> <p>Review of timbres, melody, rhythm, codas etc.</p> <p>Developing performance and audience etiquette</p>	<p>Playing with unusual or radical ideas when preparing to compose</p> <p>Composing and performing music with expressive qualities</p> <p>Considering alternative perspectives, reflecting on, and giving feedback on strengths and limitations of compositions.</p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p>Lesson period 3</p>	<p>Students receive anonymous written feedback. In small groups, choose one suggestion to improve upon. Using that suggestion, make modifications to the small group piece. After that process, they reflect on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What was your favorite part of the piece?</li> <li>What was the most unusual or interesting part of the piece and why?</li> <li>What was something about the piece your group had to compromise on?</li> <li>What is something about your piece that changed a lot over the course of working?</li> </ul>	<p>revising and improving compositions</p>	<p>Reflecting on steps taken and chosen ways of composing a musical piece relative to alternatives</p>

## Resources and examples for inspiration

### Web and print

- Age appropriate haikus printed out (for example, *Cool Melons—Turn to Frogs! The Life and Poems of Issa* by Matthew Gollub; and *The Haiku Handbook: How to Write, Share, and Teach Haiku* by William Higginson)

### Other

- Pitched and unpitched percussion Instruments may be made available for creating soundscapes. (Instruments are not absolutely necessary; students can use body and mouth percussion or found sounds.)
- Movement props may be made available (scarves, for example).

### Opportunities to adapt, extend, and enrich

- This could be combined with the activity, musical poetry, from the same OECD CERI project to make a longer unit on poetry as musical inspiration.

**Creativity and critical thinking rubric for music**

• Mapping of the different steps of the lesson plan against the OECD rubric to identify the creative and/or critical thinking skills the different parts of the lesson aim to develop

	<b>CREATIVITY</b> Coming up with new ideas and solutions	<b>Steps</b>	<b>CRITICAL THINKING</b> Questioning and evaluating ideas and solutions	<b>Steps</b>
<b>INQUIRING</b>	Make connections to other musical styles concepts or conceptual ideas in other disciplines	1-3	Identify and question assumptions and conventional rules in a musical performance, composition or analysis	3
<b>IMAGINING</b>	Play with unusual and radical ideas when preparing to perform, compose, orchestrate, or analyse a music piece	1-3	Consider several perspectives on a musical performance, composition, interpretation or analysis	1-3
<b>DOING</b>	Perform, compose, or analyse music with expressive qualities or relating to personally meaningful subject matter	2-3	Explain both strengths and limitations of a performance, a composition or an analysis of a music piece	1,2
<b>REFLECTING</b>	Reflect on steps taken to create performances, compositions or analyses of a music piece	1-3	Reflect on the chosen way of performing, composing or analysing a music piece relative to possible alternatives	3