



EXPLORING 'HARVEST OF HAIKU' BY KARLA WENDELIN

Key topics: Haiku · The five senses · Group writing · Individual writing

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Getting to know the poem

Ask your pupils to sit with their eyes closed and read each haiku out loud to them, without revealing the title and without naming the fruits or vegetables. Can they guess what is being described? Can they guess the form of each stanza of the poem?

Once you have named all the foods together, display the poem (see below) or hand out individual copies and read it again. Ask them which parts stuck in their minds and why. There are no wrong answers!

Haiku

The Poetry Archive defines a haiku as follows: "A haiku is a brief Japanese form that has been adapted into English in various ways. Its usual definition is that it is a three-line poem, consisting of seventeen syllables split 5-7-5 [...] A haiku is small in the way that a spyhole is."

<https://poetryarchive.org/glossary/haiku/>

Discuss that lovely last sentence with your class. How might a poem be like a spyhole? Do these fruits and vegetables seem small or does Karla make them feel grand and special? Why might a poet choose to use this form, which could be seen as restricting them?

The five senses

Poets like to appeal to the five senses in their poems. This helps create a vivid, rounded world for the reader to experience. Go through the poem together – can you find words and phrases which appeal to our sense of touch (e.g. fire, satin, silk), taste and smell (e.g. sweet-sour, spice), and sight (e.g. pulled taut, aglow)?

The words in the poem do not particularly call on our sense of hearing – Karla has focused on other kinds of vibrancy. But this doesn't mean you can't use your imagination to name the sounds these fruits and vegetables might make! As a class, find a sound-word to match each of Karla's haiku, e.g. 'splash' for the swimming tomatoes, 'crackle' for the fiery peppers, 'rustle' for the onion's layers.



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Group warm-up

As a class, make a list of other fruits and vegetables on the board. Choose one together and share ideas for how to describe it in an interesting, unusual way, focusing on small details. It may help to display a close-up image on the board.

For example, if you choose a banana, you could think about:

- What does the shape remind you of? A smile, the letter C, a finger, a rainbow...
- How could you give clues about its colour? The hue of happiness, the colour of sunshine, the heart of a daisy...
- Try and include some personification, e.g. by imagining the banana's skin as clothing – how might you describe it? Jacket, sleeping bag, armour...
- How does it taste? Sweet, creamy, delicious, disgusting...
- What sort of texture does it have, outside and in? Smooth, ridged, squishy, stringy...
- What sound does it make as you open it, as you eat it? Snap, rustle, squelch...

Choose some ideas and write them up into a haiku of 5-7-5 syllables.

Individual writing

Invite the children to write their own poems, inspired by 'Harvest of Haiku'. Ask them to each choose one or more new fruits and vegetables, from the list on the board, and write their own haiku for each food item. Encourage them to appeal to at least three of the five senses.

Encourage them to redraft, scribble out and change things – poets almost never get their poem right first time and their notebooks tend to be very messy! When they're ready to write it up neatly, you may like to use the print-out template below. What will they choose as their title?

Explain that if you have written a poem inspired by someone else, it's important to acknowledge them – and the easiest way to do this is with a short line underneath the title (see below).

We would love to see what your pupils come up with! Tag us on Twitter @tygertygermag with a picture or email us on tygertygermagazine@gmail.com for some personalised feedback.



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after 'Harvest of Haiku' by Karla Wendelin

by





HARVEST OF HAIKU

by Karla Wendelin

Tomatoes

Scarlet skins pulled taut
seeds swimming in sweet-sour juice
ready to explode

Peppers

Aglow from within
ruby, emerald, topaz
gems of fire and spice

Onions

Peel away layers
tissue first, then satin sheets
tearful unveiling

Watermelons

Chunky red slush in
green-striped camouflage harbours
tiny black missiles

Corn

Rows of golden teeth
wrapped in silk; green leafy lips
grin from ear to ear

