

The Ghost in the Tokaido Inn

 [scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/ghost-tokaido-inn-lesson-plan](https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/ghost-tokaido-inn-lesson-plan)

Subject Area : Language Arts

Reading Level : 6.5

Book Summary

The year is 1735. The place is Japan, on the Tokaido Road. Seikei, the 14-year-old son of a tea merchant, has only one aspiration: to become a samurai warrior who lives and dies by the code of "loyalty, courage, and honor." But no matter how hard he tries, he can never achieve his goal, for one must be born into the majestic world of the samurai. Seikei seems to lose all hope until a precious jewel, en route to the shogun, disappears without a trace, and the young boy is the only witness to this strange crime. Together, Judge Ooka, a legendary samurai, and Seikei, try to solve this ghostly mystery to find the missing ruby. Will Seikei become a true samurai after all?

Objective

Students will explore a new literary genre and produce a response to literature in this form. They will study *haiku*, a type of ancient Japanese poetry, learning about its characteristics, history, and cultural significance.

Standard: *Understands specific devices an author uses to accomplish his or her purpose (literary form or genre)*

Warm-up Activity

Read the following haiku poem by Basho:

On sweet plum blossoms
The sun rises suddenly.
Look, a mountain path!

What do you notice about the poem? Ask students to jot down their ideas and reactions.

Possible responses include: short, 3 lines, 12 words, syllable pattern (5-7-5), describes a nature scene, joyful tone (e.g., exclamation point), beautiful images, etc.

Teaching Plan

1. Share and chart ideas from the Warm-up Activity. Introduce the term *haiku*, an ancient Japanese poetic form characterized by its 5-7-5 syllabic pattern and images of nature. Explain that Basho was one of the most famous haiku poets. Note that he is also mentioned in *The Ghost in the Tokaido Inn* (p. 17).
2. Reread pages 4-5 where Seikei dreams of writing haiku and becoming a samurai. Why do you think only samurai write poetry? Why are these two activities associated with each other? Discuss and conclude that both activities are for noble, wealthy, educated men.
3. Be like Seikei on page 5. Write haikus that capture significant moments in the book. Choose at least five important scenes or events, and then transform them into simple, beautiful haiku poetry.
4. Artistically present the poems by writing them in calligraphy. Create decorative borders around the

poems that imitate the style of ancient Japanese art. Be sure to show the class examples of calligraphy writing and Japanese paintings to spark their creativity.

5. Organize a Poetry Reading where students can share their poems. Read additional poems by Basho or other Japanese poets to enhance their poetry experience.

Other Books About Japanese Samurai

The Samurai's Tale

by Erik Christian Haugaard

In 16th -century Japan, an orphan boy is cared for by a military general who teaches him to become a courageous samurai.

Den of the White Fox

by Lensey Namioka

In medieval Japan, two down-on-their-luck samurai meet a group of village boys, led by the elusive White Fox, and avenge their common enemy.

Other Books by Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler

American Family Album (series)

The Japanese American Family Album

The Demon in the Teahouse

Confucianism

Real American Girls

Cleopatra

Teaching Plan written by Lauren Gold

- Subjects:

Challenges and Overcoming Obstacles, Main Idea and Details, Literature, Literature Appreciation, Creative Writing, Poetry Writing, Growing Up, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, Creativity and Imagination, Japanese and Japanese American, Social Studies through Literature, Visual Arts, Honor, Just Rewards, Educational Standards, Teacher Tips and Strategies

- Skills:

Main Idea and Details, Poetry Writing