

The Setting Haiku

How would you like to be able to write a book report in just three short lines? Does it sound like a dream come true? Before you get too excited and decide that this is the book report for you because it will be easy, give it some thought. That is exactly what this book report will require: careful thought. In this book report you will describe the setting of your story with a haiku and an illustration.

First, think about the setting of your book. How do you see it? Does it take place at a space station in the stars? another planet? Go back and look in your book for descriptions of the setting. Write some notes and brainstorm. List some of the items and what they look like. One student listed for her setting: magnetized travel pods, large crystals, a desert-like planet, two suns, hot temperatures on the planet's surface, cool underground, gray concrete maze-like tunnels.

Next, draw your setting. Include as many things from your list as you can.

Now write a haiku. Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry. It has three lines. The first and last lines have just five syllables and no more. The second line has seven syllables. Haiku requires thought because each word is important in describing the mood or feeling of a scene or setting. A haiku usually focuses on just one or two images that suggest a time of day, a season, a physical place, or what is special about something in nature. The haiku writer focuses on the senses and what the setting means to him or her. Here is a typical haiku:

*Dolphins in the waves,
Sliding down the sloping sea;
I join with my eyes.*

The haiku above is typical because it is about a setting in nature, and it indicates the writer's response. Here are some haikus based on book settings:

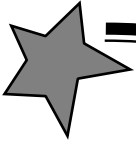
*Winter light sparkles
Coating all the prairie sod
With sparkling sprinkles*

*Solid wood beneath
Swirling winds torment above
Only safe right here*

The first was written by a student who read one of Laura Ingalls Wilder's books. The haiku describes a winter scene from one of the chapters. Notice all the "s" sounds she used? Repetitive use of a sound is a poetic tool known as *alliteration*. The second haiku is by a student who read a book about some boys who survived a storm in a treehouse fort.

Here is the haiku written by the girl who brainstormed above (compare her brainstormed list with her haiku):

*Crystals, magnets zoom
Cool wind whooshing through gray tubes
Leaving heat above.*



The Setting Haiku *(cont.)*

Now you have the challenge of taking a scene from your science fiction book and writing a haiku to describe the setting. The only rule is to keep your lines to the pattern of five, seven, and five syllables. Write several rough drafts before you come to the words you like the best. Don't be discouraged if you write many drafts. It would be better for you to write many drafts and find one you really like than to write one or two drafts and turn in one that you feel is just "okay." Use the lines below to write your drafts. When you have one you like, write it carefully at the bottom of your paper. Add your illustration above your haiku. There, you've accomplished something special!

Extension: If you decide you like writing haikus or if you wrote several that you like and can't decide which one to use for your book report, use several! Staple them together or place them in a report folder. Don't forget to add additional illustrations.

Write one or two paragraphs telling how you chose the words you used in your haiku. What are you describing? What is important about it? What is happening? etc.
