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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1994 Volume II: Poetry in the Classroom: Incentive and Dramatization

A Journey to Japan Through Poetry

Guide for Curriculum Unit 94.02.09
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This unit is designed to expose elementary students to the culture and customs of Japan. Poetry is an important part of Japanese tradition. Therefore, the lessons in the unit integrate poetry as the main focus of study. Each activity uses poetry as a reinforcement to other learning goals or a motivator to the main activity. The goal of this multi-cultural unit is that the students will gain an appreciation for writing, analyzing, reading and listening to poetry and will appreciate the culture and tradition of Japanese people. Throughout the unit the students will study Japanese poetry, Japanese children's literature books, and American poetry to reach the unit objectives. The students will write Haiku, Tanka and Haiga poems, discuss Japanese folklore, participate in Japanese festivals and study traditions of dress, food, art and music. In each of these activities, the students will produce original related poetry or original art related to the poetry studied.

Although this unit is intended for a third-grade curriculum, it could be implemented for a wide range of grade levels. A variety of reading levels in poetry and literature are included so the lessons are easily adaptable to diverse academic needs. Before the unit's implementation, the students should have written, read and discussed other types of poetry, including rhyming poems, shape poems and poetry that is related to their reading and creative writing themes.

(Recommended for Language Arts and Social Studies, grades 1-5)

Key Words

Japanese Poetry

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