Japanese Haiku
by Kimberly M. Hutmacher

Haiku is a short Japanese form of poetry. It became popular in the United States after World War II. Americans living in Japan during the occupation became interested in Japanese art and culture. The word “haiku” means “game-verse.” Haiku, having so much in common with other forms of Japanese art, is a good introduction to the country’s culture.

Because nature plays a large role in Japanese society, it is usually the main subject of a haiku. Even families living in largely populated cities care for and take joy in their gardens that may only be two or three square feet.

1. Which would be a likely topic for a haiku poem?
   a. ocean waves  
b. city traffic  
c. cooking  
d. gold coins

2. Where did haiku originate?
   a. North America  
b. Europe  
c. Africa  
d. Asia

3. Which fact about haiku is true?
   a. They are always written in Japanese.  
b. They are Japanese games or puzzles.  
c. They are short poems about nature.

Challenge: Read the three haiku on the following page. Then, use them as models to write your own haiku poem.
Three Haiku Poems
by B.J. Lee

yellow crocus
pops through snow -
hello to springtime

twilight -
crickets begin
their serenade

raindrops bounce
from spotted toadstools -
.pixie umbrellas
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