

hands-on lessons that

Handmade Poetry Books

Hand making books is a Japanese art form that has been passed down for hundreds of years. As students discover this ancient tradition, they'll create a beautiful keepsake for their own poetry.

Grade Level: 4-6

Objectives

Students will identify traditions that have been passed down over the years in the Japanese culture.
Students will identify the elements of haiku poetry.
Students will explore the art of Japanese book making and create a handmade poetry book

Literature Selection

Grandfather's Journey by Allen Say

Haiku: Learn to Express Yourself by Writing Poetry in the Japanese Tradition by Patricia Donegan

Skills

measurement, poetry, history

Set up and Prepare

Content Overview

Begin the lesson by reading the book *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say aloud to the students. Be sure to share the rich illustrations of this Caldecott Award winner. Discuss the concepts of immigration and acculturation. Ask students to locate Japan and California on a map and trace the route of the character in the story. Ask the students to describe how it would feel to travel that far from home to a place with different customs, language, and culture. Engage them in a dialogue about the differences between Japanese culture and American culture. Explain that a big part of Japanese tradition is creative expression in the form of art and poetry. Hand making books is a form of Japanese art that has been passed down over the years.

Next, share an example of a haiku poem on the board or chart paper. Ask the students to read the poem silently to themselves and think about what makes it a poem. Explain that haiku poems have three lines each with a certain pattern of syllables. Traditional haikus are written about nature. In Japanese, the word haiku means "beginning verse." *Haiku: Learn to Express Yourself by Writing Poetry in the Japanese Tradition* by Patricia Donegan provides a great foundation for understanding the keys to haiku and examples of different types of haikus. Take some time to share some of the examples in the book with students.



Materials

Elmer's® School Glue, Elmer's® X-TREME Glue Stick®, cardboard, scrapbooking paper or wrapping paper, plain white or light colored paper, ruler, scissors, ribbon

Preparation

Cut cardboard into 4 1/2" x 6 1/2" pieces. Prepare the cardboard covers with an X-ACTO craft knife and a metal ruler to produce clean edges (adults only). Each student will need two pieces of cardboard.



Directions

Measure and cut the patterned paper so that you have two pieces that measure exactly 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" for the cover of the book. Place patterned paper face down and the cardboard in the center of it. Beginning with the long edges, fold the paper over the cardboard and apply Elmer's X-TREME Glue Stick to hold it in place. Cut small notches in the top flaps (resembling an envelope flap) so that you'll have a clean corner. Then fold those flaps down and glue them in place. Repeat the process for the second cover piece.



Cut two pieces of copy paper that measure 4" x 12." Fold them in half so that they measure 4" x 6." Glue each to the cardboard side of the covers. Note: If the pattern has a specific orientation (top/bottom), be sure to align the covers accordingly so when the paper folds are both on the binding side of the book the covers align properly.



Assemble the covers so that the folded papers align on the left side. Cut a piece of ribbon that measures 20" in length. Tie a bow in the ribbon to indicate placement on the book. Trace a light pencil mark along the ribbon and make a small pencil mark on each end of the ribbon as a guide to the section and placement of the ribbon on the back cover. Untie the ribbon and trace a line of glue on the back cover along your pencil mark. Align the ribbon according to the pencil markings and glue the ribbon to the cover. Let dry completely.



Flip the book over and apply a line of glue approximately 2" in length on the left side of the front cover. Apply the left end of the ribbon to the glue and let dry completely. This will attach the two covers while enabling you to open and close it the book.

When the glue is completely dry, instruct the students to write on the front cover and illustrate a haiku poem on each page of the book. Tie the ribbon to present the book of writing as a gift for your reader.

Lesson Extension

Explore the art of "sempuyo" which is another form of Japanese books with accordion-style pages. Encourage students to create another handmade book using this method. (Note: They will need paper that is longer than 18 inches long to create enough folds for the book.)

Standards

CCSS: ELA-Literacy: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

CCSS: ELA-Literacy: Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fit together to provide the overall structure of a story, drama, or poem.

CCSS: ELA-Literacy: Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of various poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter)