



### Overview

A poem with five lines and a syllable pattern of 5, 7, 5, 7, 7. Together, the poem is thirty-one syllables long. Usually, the first three lines may describe a state or situation and the last two provide more detail, or the poet's comment.

#### Prior knowledge (of the genre)

- You have not explored syllabic before; however, you have explored poems with certain constraints e.g. calligrams and shape poems. You experiment with alliteration in Year 2.

#### Writing opportunities

- This unit will build on your learning about haikus in Spring 1. You will explore this more complex structure and consider your language choices carefully, thinking about the difference between the start and end of the poem.

#### Writing objectives

- Write poetry that uses sound to create effects e.g. alliteration, distinctive rhythms.
- Generate synonyms for common words.
- Experiment with deleting words to see which are essential.
- Investigate word order for effect.

### Context

The tanka poem is one of the oldest forms of Japanese poetry; it originated in the seventh century. The word tanka translates to "short song."

Similar to haiku poetry, tanka poems have specific syllable requirements. They also use many literary devices, including personification, metaphors and similes to paint a picture in the reader's mind.

"Tanka contests" were put on and participated in by the nobles. These poems were short enough to allow for quick composition, but long enough to allow for emotional expression. Themes ranged from nature to love.

### Structure - How do I set my poem out?

Each line has a set number of syllables.



5-7-5-7-7

#### An example of a tanka poem

Crash at two A.M.  
 I opened my bedroom door  
 A white cat ran by  
 Startled by the clanging fall  
 Of the treat jar's metal lid

The third line is called the "pivot," which means a turning point. The pivot divides the tanka into two different sections, which are joined in the middle in order to tell the whole story.

### Features of the genre - What words and techniques should I use?

You should consider your word choices, in order to create a vivid picture in the mind of the reader. You can do this by carefully using:

Nouns (things): e.g. rather than 'man', be more exact, e.g. 'explorer' or 'pensioner.'

Adjectives (describing words): e.g. rather than the big ocean, the 'vast ocean.'

Verbs (actions): e.g. rather than 'runner', you could use 'sprinter' or 'jogger.'

#### Do Tanka Poems Rhyme?

Rhyming isn't a requirement or the focus for a tanka poem. Most don't rhyme, although it wouldn't disqualify it from being a tanka

Metaphors are when you state that one thing is another thing for effect, e.g. 'you are my sunshine.'

Alliteration is using the same sound at the beginning of words, e.g. 'Battering beast' or 'Toothed Terroriser.'

Onomatopoeia is when the sound of the word is the same as the sound being described, e.g. bang, crash.



### Content - What am I writing about?

Make links to your History topic on 'Ancient Egypt' by creating a tanka poem on an element of this topic e.g. a pharaoh.