

## *Haiku Checklist*

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Instead of writing about reactions to sparks, write about what cause the sparks.

Avoid adjective, adverbs, or words that interpret what you experience.

1. How long is your haiku? Suggestion: write 2 - 3 lines, 10 - 17 syllables. Haiku do NOT have to be 5-7-5
2. Some haiku imply a season—*spring, summer, fall, or winter*. A *kigo* or “season word” tells readers when the poem happens, such as saying “tulips” for spring or “snow” for winter.
3. Does your poem make a “leap,” by having two parts? A *kireji* or “cutting word” usually cuts the poem into two parts (not 3). Giving your poem two parts can strengthen haiku.
4. Is your haiku about common, everyday events in nature or human life? To help, describe what you experience through your 5 senses.
5. Does your poem give readers a feeling? Present what *caused* your feeling not the feeling itself. Don’t explain or judge, describe.
6. Is your poem in the present tense? Make your haiku feel like it’s happening now. Use the present tense.
7. Write from personal experience. (When you write other poetry, you can make things up, but avoid that with haiku. Memories are okay.)
8. Did you capitalize or punctuate? Haiku are fragments not sentences. Avoid starting with a capital letter or ending with a period.
9. Avoid titles and rhyme. Haiku don’t need titles and rarely rhyme.
10. What to do with your haiku: illustrate them, collect in a notebook or display, write haiku in your journal daily, enter contests, publish them, share haiku at a poetry reading, online, etc.

Haiku master Matsuo Bashō suggests, “Learn the rules, then forget them.” In other words, internalize the rules (targets) so that they become second nature. Have fun **reading** and writing haiku. Enjoy noticing life more through your **5 senses!**