GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

TANKA

★ Very similar to haiku, only longer, is the form of Japanese verse called tanka. It consists of a total of 31 syllables distributed in the following way:

Line 1 . . . . . 5 syllables
Line 2 . . . . . 7 syllables
Line 3 . . . . . 5 syllables
Line 4 . . . . . 7 syllables
Line 5 . . . . . 7 syllables

You will notice that the first three lines are identical to haiku. The procedures used for writing tanka are the same as those for haiku. It would be important, however, to have more 7-syllable phrases generated and available on the chalkboard for use in creating tanka.

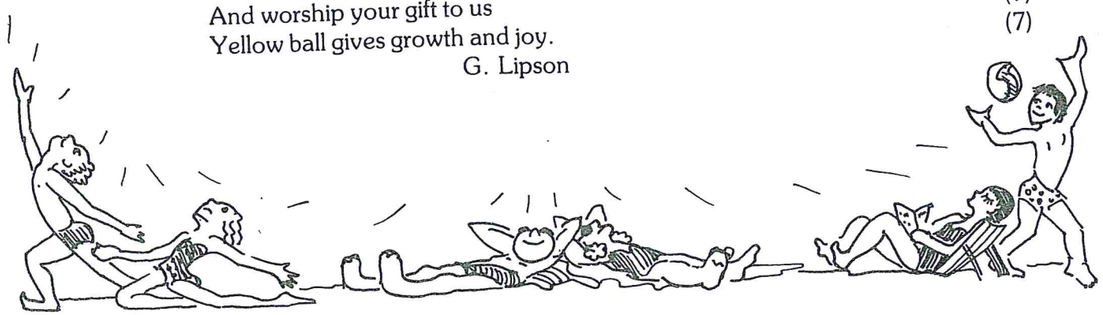
An interesting class activity is to pair children off and have the partnerships write only the first three lines of the tanka. When the task is completed by everyone, collect the three-liners.

Redistribute so that no partnership has its own paper. Now, invite students to reflect on the three-liners before them and to complete them with the last two lines, each being a 7-syllable line.

Return the tankas to the original owners. Have a sharing session and make positive acknowledgment of the creative effort revealed in the writing of tanka. Using appropriate background music, these tankas lend themselves well to dramatic reading. The tapes can then be used as an accompaniment to a slide show featuring relevant scenes.

Two samples of a tanka follow:

	Syllables
	(5)
The rain spills from clouds	(7)
Over thirsty grass and trees	(5)
It mists the landscape	(7)
Like a soft gentle shower	(7)
Spring awakens the whole world.	
G. Lipson	
	(5)
Warm us today sun	(7)
Come look down with your hot smile	(5)
We'll look up at you	(7)
And worship your gift to us	(7)
Yellow ball gives growth and joy.	
G. Lipson	



STUDENT WORK SHEET

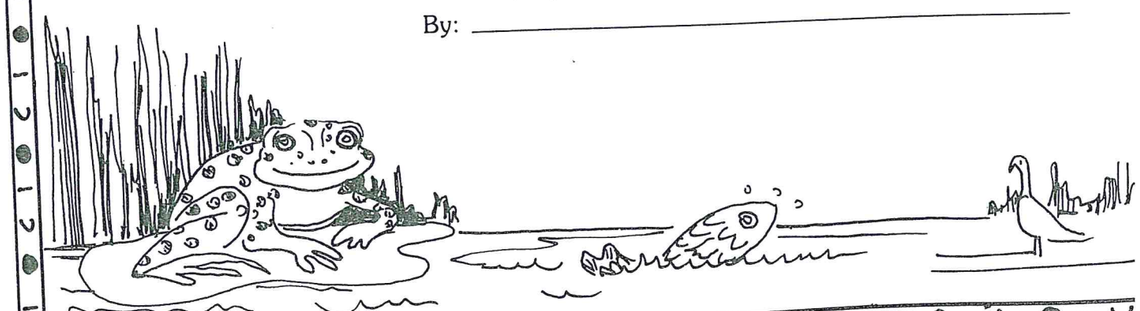
TANKA

Tanka is a poem of Japanese origin consisting of 31 syllables distributed across five lines. This poetic form does not usually rhyme.

1. Think of a scenic spot or gaze out the classroom window, quietly.
2. Capture in words what you see and feel. Write as many colorful phrases as you can think of.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Check each phrase. Adjust your phrases until all are either 7 or 5 syllables long.
4. Now, create a tanka below, cut it out and mount it for display.

_____
(5 syllables)
_____
(7 syllables)
_____
(5 syllables)
_____
(7 syllables)
_____
(7 syllables)

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