

Noble Academy Columbus

Wabi Sabi - Japan - Lesson Plan

Amanda Lucero
Talented and Gifted Language Arts
Noble Academy Columbus

Purpose:

The purpose of this unit is to introduce my students to the Japanese poetry form, haiku. They will be exposed to haiku in the book Wabi Sabi by Mark Reibstein and will create original haiku as a culminating activity. The students will also learn of the Japanese wabi-sabi aesthetic and come up with examples.

Target Group:

I will be teaching this unit to a group of six gifted third grade students. They get pulled out daily for one 45-minute period of enrichment Language Arts.

Estimated Duration: 4 45-minute class periods

Essential Questions:

What is beauty?

What is wabi-sabi?

Why is it a good thing that each of us has different ideas about what is beautiful in the world?

What are haiku?

Activities

Day 1:

Ask the students what they believe "beauty" means.

Give them about 15 minutes to draw a picture of something or someone that they believe is beautiful along with a three sentence explanation. (I will start them off with "_____ is beautiful to me because...")

Once everyone is done, ask for volunteers to share their work.

Tell the students that in Japan, people have a particular term for beauty called "wabi-sabi" (write this phrase on the board).

Find Japan on globe.

Give students a quick summary of the story I am going to read them.

Begin reading Wabi Sabi out loud to the class. Point out that there are haiku on each page and hint that each student will be writing his own original haiku in a few days. Finish reading the story.

Day 2:

Ask students to orally retell the story.

Can anyone explain the Japanese idea of wabi-sabi? Reread the story and have the students write down the examples of wabi-sabi.

Have students come up with their own definition of wabi-sabi, and find 5 examples in their life.

Day 3:

Have students share their own definitions of wabi-sabi and their examples from last night's homework.

Give each student a straw and a piece of paper.

Today we are going to make some wabi-sabi style artwork. Demonstrate for students how to drop food coloring on the paper and then blow the food coloring around with the straw. Have a few finished samples to show them.

Each student will be given some time today to create a few pieces of artwork. Encourage students to use their wabi-sabi definition as inspiration-- imperfections are okay, as is simplicity.

Early finishers: print off some Japanese letters for them to practice writing.

http://www.japanese-lesson.com/resources/pdf/hiragana_writing_practice_sheets.pdf

or teach simple Chinese characters, "mountain" 山

or "water" 水

or "heart/spirit" 心

Day 4:

Put some of Basho's haiku on the board. Ask the students to read them and see if they can figure out what they have in common (three lines, 5-7-5 pattern, about nature).

Give a brief history of haiku.

Talk about the haiku in Wabi Sabi.

Give each student their straw paintings from yesterday. Each student will come up with a haiku (or several) that tells the story of their painting.

Resources

Wabi Sabi by Mark Reibstein

http://www.japanese-lesson.com/resources/pdf/hiragana_writing_practice_sheets.pdf

Brain Pop "poetry" video

<http://thegreenleaf.co.uk/hp/basho/00bashohaiku.htm>