

## Five-line Poems

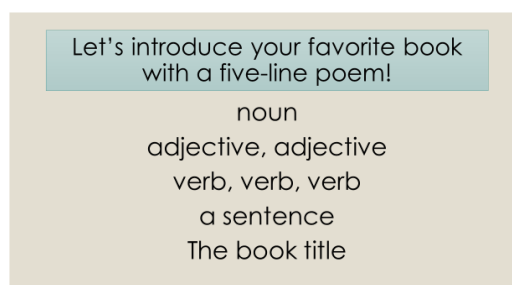
<b>❏ Time Required</b>	About 60–90 minutes
<b>❏ Primary Skills</b>	Content comprehension, grammar (parts of speech)
<b>❏ Format</b>	Examples: Individual + 4-person groups/class activity
<b>❏ Overview and Goals</b>	
<p>The Q&amp;A format is often used to confirm students’ understanding of the books assigned for extensive reading. Five-line poems are useful for helping the teacher recognize whether students have grasped the worldview presented in a given book, and the poems help students express what they have taken note of when reading.</p> <p>This activity allows students to focus on both verbal and nonverbal usage and expressions in a single exercise. Beginner-level students often exhibit a limited understanding of parts of speech. A five-line poem must use specified parts of speech, as shown below; thus, the learners as well as the teacher may easily confirm the extent to which they understand parts of speech in English.</p>	
<b>❏ To Prepare in Advance (required teaching materials, equipment, etc.)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postcard-sized white notecards</li> <li>• Stationery, markers, colored pencils, crayons, paints, colored paper, photos for creating a collage, glue, scissors, etc.</li> <li>• Dictionaries (English-Japanese and Japanese-English)</li> <li>• Books to be used for the five-line poem (optional: document camera, PC, projector, tablecloth, large-sized colored paper)</li> </ul>	
<b>❏ Procedure</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask students to choose a book that they read in the past and reread it before the class. Tell them they should not only review the synopsis, but also recognize the themes, content, and worldview presented in the book. In addition, instruct students to bring their books to the next class in order to create their five-line poem notecards.</li> <li>2. Show some slides representing five-line poems. Explain how to arrange words to describe the theme, content, and worldview of the book to be introduced while adhering to the following: place one noun in the first line, two adjectives in the second, three verbs in the third, a sentence (either the original or a quote from the book being introduced) in the fourth line, and the title of the book in the fifth (see the “Example Slides” and “Other Notes” sections below).</li> <li>3. Each student will create a five-line poem to introduce the selected book. Instruct students who do not understand parts of speech to look up the words they have chosen in a dictionary. Advise them to revise their work several times, and in the process, have them read aloud, make rhymes, and check the rhythm of their English poems. The teacher should monitor students</li> </ol>	



and help them with parts of speech and word choices.

4. Students will sketch designs suitable for their poems. Each student will create a card with a poem and illustration(s). Emphasize that the goal is not necessarily to achieve “aesthetic perfection” but to convey the content and worldview of the book being introduced in the most attractive way. Explain that different effects can be made by changing the font, color, and design (see explanatory slides below).
  - The creation of poems and notecards/slides can be an out-of-class assignment.
  - Students should be instructed to read their poems aloud two or three times while presenting their five-line poem cards in small groups. Additionally, they should explain their intention for writing their poems and the message of each poem. Alternatively, students can read and explain their five-line poem cards to the class using a document camera.
5. Display the students’ cards on a desk or wall in the classroom for “gallery time.” For desks, lay out a cloth or paper that matches their cards. The cards and book introduced by each student can be displayed next to each other and posted directly on the wall or mounted there on large-size paper to display them in gallery style. Students will be free to move around and enjoy the exhibition during gallery time. For their entertainment, they can vote for their favorite cards using stickers or candy.
  - For remote classes, applications such as Google Jamboard or Padlet can be used to view students’ visual works. Comments can also be posted.
  - This activity can be conducted as a variation of Post Office Protocol (POP). PowerPoint slides can also be used. The following slides present examples for the activity.

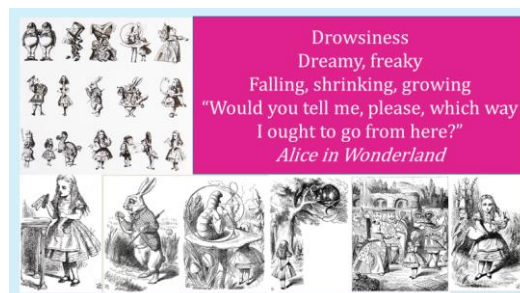
#### Example Slides





DROWSINESS  
DREAMY, FREAKY  
FALLING, SHRINKING, GROWING  
"WOULD YOU TELL ME, PLEASE, WHICH  
WAY I OUGHT TO GO FROM HERE?"  
*ALICE IN WONDERLAND*

*Drowsiness  
Dreamy, freaky  
Falling, shrinking, growing  
"Would you tell me, please, which way I  
ought to go from here?"  
Alice in Wonderland*



### Application/Explanation

Creating a notecard or slide with a five-line poem and a design and font that match the poem can generate many activities. They include:

- (1) A visual aid for book talks
- (2) POPs in classrooms and library reading modules
- (3) An exercise to be conducted as part of a five-line poem contest
- (4) An activity to be combined with ICT



Students who have difficulty with the English language and interpersonal communication skills tend to feel ignored or left out in the foreign language classroom. An advantage of this activity is that such students can demonstrate their ability to express themselves and receive positive feedback from others. Approval and self-affirmation foster a group dynamism that embraces diversity. Such warm exchanges contribute to the creation of a positive environment for foreign language learning. This approach can also serve as an opportunity for students who dislike English to discover an interest in the language and extensive reading.

### **Other Notes**

While there are several ways to craft an English-language five-line poem derived from a Japanese five-line poem (e.g., one word for the first line, two for the second, three for the third, four for the fourth, one for the fifth<sup>1</sup>, etc.), I learned the above method directly from Takako Nishino and have been applying it as a reading activity. This allows anyone to enjoy writing poetry in a simple way.

#### **Note 1**

On the slides above, the last line shows the book title instead of representing a noun.

(Text: Yuka Kusanagi)