



The Northland Beckons: An Illustrated Haiku Journey

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Ages 4-10

Adult English Language Learners

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This guide is intended for grades 2-6, but can be used with older learners when introducing the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and/or writing haiku. This guide can also be modified to teach higher grade level and adult learners of English.

Pre-reading:

Introduction and Predictions

Questions to discuss prior to reading

1. Have you heard the word “beckon” before? What do you think it means?
2. Look at the cover of the book, how many of these natural characters have you seen before? For newer to country students: Do you see these animals in your home country?
3. This book says it is a journey, how do you think we humans will travel?
4. How do you think the different animals travel? (This would be a good opportunity to incorporate TPR, Total Physical Response, to connect the actions with the verbs that describe movement for students learning those skills.)
5. Have you ever visited a lake or the forest?
6. What did you see there?

Read the first haiku to the class:

The Northland beckons

On journeys we will travel

Let me tell you tales

During the deepest, darkest days of winter, I dream of summer in the Northlands. I know that under everything cold and lifeless lie seeds that will grow in warmer weather. I start to plan a trip to paddle through the Northland waters.

To discuss:

1. What do we think beckon means?
It means: “to appear inviting or to attract.”
Can you think of something that beckons you?
2. The author says that she plans a trip to paddle through the Northland waters. Now how do you think we will travel?
3. This book is written in the poem format of haiku. As we read the book together, notice if you can find a pattern in how the haiku are written.

Reading the book:

There are a total of 24 haiku in this book. This book could be read as a read-aloud by the teacher, discussing each haiku as you go. It could also be read in small groups or in pairs and then the class comes together to discuss words and concepts students do not know.

Possible follow up questions for after reading the book:

1. What parts of nature in this book do you already know about?
2. What parts of nature in this book do you not know anything about?
3. Was there anything in this book that surprised you?
4. Would you like to go on a canoe trip now?
5. What experience do you have being in the woods or on a lake or river?

Writing your own haiku:

The author and illustrator state: “Our hope is that this book inspires you to see the beauty surrounding you and to write your own *haiku* to capture special memories.”

There are times when we do not have our phones or the ability to take a picture of something, but our words can help us to create a mental picture that we will never forget. We are going to write our own haiku about something we find beautiful in our own lives.

First let's review how that works. Re-read the backstory of the book that explains how to write a haiku.

(For younger learners or newer English learners, introduce how syllables work.)

Syllables!

Here's a brief explanation:

Syllables are smaller sounds that make up words and have one vowel sound.

The vowels of our English alphabet are a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y.

The consonants are all of the other letters: b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, z, and sometimes y

Some syllables are single words like: my, you, fun, blue, and even the word: strength.

Even though that is a long word, it still has one vowel sound so it is one syllable.

The word "blue" has two vowels in it, but because the 'e' is silent, it has one vowel sound, so it's one syllable.

Here is a fun interactive video to learn how to count out syllables.

[Clapping out syllables](#)

Figurative Language:

The fun thing about writing poetry is playing with language. The haiku of *The Northland Beckons* has many examples of figurative language.

Onomatopoeia - using words that suggest the sense of that word, for example, buzz and screech

Example from the text:

Splotchety split splat

Pit pat pit pat pitter pat

Thumpety whoosh sloop

Personification - giving human qualities to something that is not human

Example from the text:

Between setting sun

And night is mosquito dance

Try not to join them!

Alliteration - the repeating of the first consonant sounds in two or more words that are close to each other.

Example from the text:

Most memorable

Monumental majestic

Mighty massive moose

Repetition - repeating a word or phrase to add stronger meaning

Example from the text:

Pad pad, little one

Pad pad pad, do you see me?

Pad pad, slip away

Simile - comparing two things that aren't alike using the words like or as

Example from the text:

Life jacket and boots

Lying on my back I float

Like my friend otter

Metaphor - a word or phrase saying that something *is* something else even though they are very different. (like a simile but without using like or as)

Example from the text:

Towering fingers

Deliver dreams to heaven

Whispered acceptance

Rhyme -the repeating syllable sounds in a line of speech or text

Example from the text:

Mr. Fisher goes

A-walkin' through the campsite

I'm a stalkin' too

Possible extension activities:

1. After reading the book, have students identify the figurative language they see in the haiku, as there are more than the examples above.
2. After experimenting with writing initial haiku, ask students to write a haiku of their own using some of these different figurative language formats.

3. For students with limited English language skills, they could focus their haiku on how their animal is moving or what their animal is doing in their sketch.
4. Sometimes it's very difficult to think of words to write haiku. Here is a mini-thesaurus for some of the most common adjectives in English.

[mini-thesaurus](#)

Literature and Art Extensions:

Nature walk/sketch and gallery walk.

1. Provide each student with a pencil and sketchbook with a firm backing. Take students for a nature walk around the school grounds or to a neighboring park. Ask students to notice something in nature that they see and to sketch what they are seeing.

Back in the classroom, looking at their sketch, have students write a haiku about what they saw. Students then finish adding color to their illustration.

Post haiku and drawings in a space where the class can have a gallery walk to appreciate what their classmates have created. Discuss what similarities and differences students notice in each other's work.

Pair Interpretation and Illustration

This is a good activity to do to learn a little bit more about how children's books are illustrated. Some children's books are written and illustrated by the same person, and that makes a lot of sense. However, most children's books are actually written by one person and illustrated by another person. Sometimes the author and the illustrator live a long distance from each other and can only communicate over the phone or online. This activity will help us to learn about the skills we need to be a good listener and illustrator as well as a good explainer of what we are thinking.

1. This activity could get a bit silly, and that's OK.
2. After reading the book, ask students to write a haiku about something in nature that they have noticed or is meaningful for them. That could be a homework assignment, or something they saw on the playground or on a nature walk with the class.
3. Pair students in chairs back to back so that they cannot see each other.

4. Student A reads their haiku to Student B. Student B has a sketchbook and a pencil to draw an illustration.
5. Student A can only read the haiku and answer questions about the haiku that Student B asks. Student B must ask the clarifying questions they need to draw the illustration to match Student A's haiku.
6. Student A cannot look at the drawing until the time is up. The time is dependent upon the age and/or the ability for the students to focus on this activity, 5 - 10 minutes.
7. When the time is up, Student B shares the illustration with Student A. Discuss what they got right, what is missing and their overall impression of the process, 3 minutes.
8. Now students switch roles and Student B reads their haiku while Student A illustrates it. When time is up, discuss how the process went this time.
9. Come back together as a class to discuss what was learned. Follow-up questions:
What was easy to understand and what was difficult to understand?
What did students learn about their partners and themselves through this process?
What are the things that helped the illustrators to understand what the haiku was really about?
How did you feel when trying to use only your words to explain to your partner what to draw?
How do you think illustrators of children's books figure out how to draw pictures for the authors who write them?

Language Extensions:

For students who are interested in the history of haiku, Basho and Japanese writing systems, please visit:

The Japanese syllabary:

[The Japanese syllabary](#)

Information on Matsuo Basho:

[Detailed biography of Basho](#)

[Short biography of Basho](#)

Science, geography, and environmental studies extension:

The author writes about some of the most common species in the Boundary Waters area, but there are many more! Using this website: [Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Species List](#), have students research a species of interest to them and share with the class.

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Quetico Provincial Park are very fragile ecosystems. To learn more about it and the geography of this area, students can research these websites:

[Friends of the Boundary Waters](#)

[Quetico Superior Foundation](#)

Plan your trip!

Have students research these two sites to learn what they need to do to plan a trip to the Northlands!

[Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Superior National Forest](#)

[Quetico Provincial Park](#)

After students have learned what they need to do to plan a trip to the Northlands, it's time for some map work!

Being able to read a map is necessary in traveling in the Boundary Waters. It is a wilderness area, so most of the Boundary Waters has no cell coverage which means you cannot depend upon a phone to navigate. [Fisher Maps](#) has many maps to sell if you're unable to locate maps from another source.

Using the legend on the map, encourage students to map out a route that they would like to travel asking themselves these questions.

1. How many days would I like to be out on my trip?
2. How many miles do I think I can paddle in a day?
3. How many portages do I want to do in one day?
4. How long are the portages?
5. What do you notice about the names of the lakes? How do you think they got those names?

Field trip option:

From Memorial Day until mid-October, the Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center is open 7 days a week. They are located 57 miles up the Gunflint Trail at:

28 Moose Pond Drive, Grand Marais, MN 55604

They do very fun interactive field trips with students and visitors.

You can learn more about them here: [Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center](#)

A field trip option that is closer to the Twin Cities area is the Snake River Fur Post located at:

12551 Voyageur Lane

Pine City, MN 55063

You can learn more about them here: [Snake River Fur Post](#)

Many local parks and camps offer the opportunity to learn how to paddle a canoe either as a school trip or individually. [Lebanon Hills Regional Park](#) and [YMCA Camp St. Croix](#) are two options, but there are many more available!