

CHAPTER  
**3**

## LITERATURE SELECTION

**Haiku**

by Matsuo Basho

**Section 3**

*Matsuo Basho (1644–1694) was one of the greatest Japanese haiku poets. What natural objects or scenes does Basho describe in the following haiku?*

***On the Road to Nara***

Oh, these spring days!  
A nameless little mountain,  
wrapped in morning hazel.

***The Autumn Storm***

Wild boars and all  
are blown along with it—  
storm-wind of fall!

***The Cuckoo***

Little gray cuckoo:  
sing and sing; and fly and fly—  
Oh, so much to do!

from Harold G. Henderson, ed., *An Introduction to Haiku*  
(Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1958),  
33–44.

**Research Options**

1. **Writing Expository Paragraphs** Find out about the form of Japanese poetry known as *haiku*. Then write a brief explanation and share it with classmates.
2. **Making Judgments** Find one or two examples of *haiku* by other Japanese poets and read them aloud to the class. Then work with your classmates to assemble an illustrated anthology of your favorite *haiku*.

***The Chestnut Burr***

The winds of fall  
are blowing, yet how green  
the chestnut burr.

***Beauty***

The usually hateful crow:  
he, too—this morning,  
on the snow!

***The Mushroom***

The mushroom:  
from an unknown tree, a leaf  
sticks to it.

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#### *Haiku*

1. Through their research, students will find that haiku are short lyric poems consisting of 17 syllables arranged in three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables. The form flourished in the 16th and 17th centuries in Japan and is still being used today.
2. Informally assess students' recitations and their participation in creating a class anthology. When students complete their anthology, you may want to have them share copies with other classes.