

Virtual Visit: Outline

Katsushika Hokusai

Under the Great Wave, off Kanagawa, 1829–1833

Content Areas

English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Visual Art

Essential Question

How did Japanese printmakers and poets of the 19th century express feelings and symbolic meanings through artworks depicting nature?

Overview

A museum educator leads students to explore Katsushika Hokusai's *Under the Great Wave, off Kanagawa*, a Japanese woodblock print from the 1830s. The educator visually analyzes the image and explains the social context of the print so that students can interpret its symbolism. Students learn about the structure and history of haikus and read several examples, drawing connections between the art forms of haiku and woodblock prints. They brainstorm words and phrases based on their 5 senses while observing Hokusai's print and write a haiku with teacher support.

Objectives

- Students will learn how and why Japanese artists created woodblock prints and haikus.
- Students will find symbolic meanings through an analysis of visual elements of Hokusai's print.
- Students will write a correctly-structured haiku that is descriptive and evocative.

Materials

Blank paper and pencil.

Key Terms

- Woodblock printing
- Landscape
- Symbol
- Haiku

Discussion/Support

Teachers can support students by checking for comprehension and prompting students to reflect and respond to questions asked during the virtual visit. They can assist students to complete the assignment and help students share their work with each other, as well as online ([#RISDMuseum](#) [#museumfromhome](#) [#TeachingwithArt](#)) or with the RISD Museum at teachers@risd.edu.

Evaluation of Student Work

Students will brainstorm words and phrases describing sensory qualities based on the print *Under the Great Wave, off Kanagawa* and will use their observations to compose an original haiku of phrases or sentences using the haiku's 5-7-5 syllable structure inspired by the print.

Discussion Questions and Prompts

Two minute freewrite: What do you see? What might you hear, smell, taste and feel if you were in this scene?

Write a haiku inspired by Hokusai's *Under the Great Wave, off Kanagawa*. Use phrases or sentences with 5, 7, 5 syllables.

Works in this Lesson

Utagawa Hiroshige, [*Tree Sparrows and Japanese Morning Glories*](#), 1830s

Keisai Eisen, [*Beauties of the Floating World as Three Musical Instruments*](#), 1820s

Utagawa Kunisada, [*Shokunin \(Artisans\)*](#), 1857

Katsushika Hokusai, [*Under the Great Wave, off Kanagawa*](#), ca. 1829–1833

Katsushika Hokusai, [*Rainstorm Beneath the Summit*](#), 1830–31

Katsushika Hokusai, [*Viewing Sunset over Ryōgoku Bridge from the Onmaya Embankment*](#), ca. 1829–1833

Katsushika Hokusai, [*Mount Fuji from the Tea Plantation of Katakura, Suruga Province*](#), 1833

Katsushika Hokusai, [*Reflection in Lake Misaka, Kai Province*](#), ca. 1833

Utagawa Hiroshige, [*Great Tit and Camellias*](#), 1830s

Haiku by Yoshida Ryusui (1691–1758)

Haiku by Natsume Sōseki (1868–1916)

More Activities and Resources

Teaching Notes: [Artists Ideas, Materials, and Process](#) pg. 9–10

Article: [Fly Me To Edo: What is it like to walk inside a print?](#)