

Renga Poetry

Renga is an ancient Japanese style of poetry made up of **stanzas**. It is usually created by several people, each one taking a turn coming up with a stanza that relates to a single theme for the whole poem. The first stanza is three lines long. The first line is 5 **syllables**, the second is 7 and the third is 5. The second stanza is two lines long, both are 7 syllables each. The poem goes back and forth between the three and two line stanzas and ends with a two line stanza. It can be as long as you want to make it. The famous **haiku** poetry style came from just using the first stanza of a renga poem



VOCABULARY

Stanza: A part of a poem that usually has at least two lines and creates the repeating pattern of the poem.

Syllable: A single sound. It's usually part of a word, but some words are only one syllable long. *Poem* is pronounced *po-em*, it has two syllables. *March* has only one syllable. *Tomorrow* is pronounced *to-mor-row*, it has three syllables.

Haiku: A form of Japanese poetry that is three lines long. The first line is 5 syllables, the second is 7 and the last is 5.



EXAMPLE

First Stanza (5 syllables) (7 syllables) (5 syllables)	Snow yet remaining The mountain slopes are misty - An evening in spring.
Second Stanza (7) (7)	Far away the water flows Past the plum-scented village.
Third Stanza (5) (7) (5)	In the river breeze The willow trees are clustered Spring is appearing.
Fourth Stanza (7) (7)	The sound of a boat being poled Clear in the morning light.
Fifth Stanza (5) (7) (5)	The moon! does it still Over fog-enshrouded fields Linger in the sky?
Last Stanza (7) (7)	Meadows carpeted in frost - Autumn has drawn to a close.



Portrait of the famous renga poet Sōgi.

