

Tanka

A tanka is a Japanese poem based on the haiku (17 syllables, 5:7:5), but with two additional lines (31 syllables, 5:7:5:7:7) to give a complete picture of an event or mood. Traditionally with the courtship or friendship form of tanka, one friend would write a haiku and the receiver would add two lines and return it.

Line 1 – 5 syllables	Living on the farm
Line 2 – 7 syllables	There are lots of animals
Line 3 – 5 syllables	Eating lots of food
Line 4 – 7 syllables	Roosters, hens and chicks live there
Line 5 – 7 syllables	They are all very happy.

Now try the friendship form of tanka. Write haiku (3 lines) for your friend, then give the haiku to your friend so they can write a tanka (5 lines) in return.

Haiku note	Tanka response
5 syllables	5 syllables
	7 syllables
7 syllables	5 syllables
	7 syllables
5 syllables	7 syllables

Now illustrate:

