Lesson Plan:
An introduction to Sijo

Purpose: To provide students an introductory lesson on Korean sijo.

Audience: 9-12th grade

Learning objective: Students will be able to define the characteristics of sijo and compose an original sijo.

Standards:
RL.9-10.2 Analyze literary text development.
  a. Determine a theme of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details.

RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

RL.9-10.6 Analyze how a point of view, perspective, or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

Materials: attached handout

Time: one 52 minute class period.

Steps:

1. Introduce hand out
2. Read the introduction silently
3. As a whole class read the first sijo and identify the characteristics and discuss theme and meaning of the poem.
4. In small groups read the second sijo and work to identify characteristics.
5. Read the third poem individually and identify characteristics.
6. Students will compose their own sijo if time permits, or they may complete as homework or as an extension.
Korean Poetry

Sijo

The spring breeze melted snow on the hills, then quickly disappeared.
I wish I could borrow it briefly to blow over my hair
and melt away the aging frost forming now about my ears.

춘산에 눈 녹인 바람 건듯 불고 간디업네
저근듯 비러다가 뿌리과져 머리우희
귀밋혀 해묵은 서리를 불녀볼까 하노라

U-Taek (1262-1342)

Korean Sijo poetry emerged during the late Koryŏ dynasty (fourteenth century) It was written in Chinese characters by wealthy Korean nobility After Hangul, the Korean alphabet, was invented in 1446, writing and education became available to a broader audience and Sijo increased in popularity.

Korean sijo is a poetic form similar to haiku. However, sijo is more lyrical and personal than Haiku. It is 3 lines in length, averaging 14-16 syllables per line (for a poem total of 44-46 syllables).

First line: introduces the situation or theme of the poem.
Second line: develops the theme with more detail or a shift or a turn in sound tone or meaning
Third line: conclusion or closure

Sijo poets used primarily the following themes in their poems:

- loyalty,
- filial piety,
- respect,
- humanity
- nature.
- occasionally love
Read the following sijo poem with a partner or small group:

All alone, I see the moon so bright, as I sit on fortress walls.
My sword held close tonight I keep the watch with anxious heart.
Yet somewhere in the darkened night, a pipe lulls worry away.

한산섬 달 밝은 밤에, 수루에 혼자 앉아
큰 칼 옆에 차고, 깊은 시름하던 차에,
어디서 일성호가, 나의 애를 끊나니.

1. Count and write down how many syllables are in each line.

2. What is the basic situation in the poem?

3. How does the poem shift or turn in the second line?

4. What is the conclusion of the poem?

5. What is the theme of this poem?

One more time by yourself:

You ask how many friends I have? Water and stone, bamboo and pine.
The moon rising over the eastern hill is a joyful comrade.
Besides these five companions, what other pleasure should I ask?

...Yon Son-do (1587-1671)

1. Count and write down how many syllables are in each line.

2. What is the basic situation in the poem?
3. *How does the poem shift or turn in the second line?*

4. *What is the conclusion of the poem?*

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**On a separate piece of paper, compose your own sijo.**

- 3 lines: 3 pts
- Correct number of syllables: 3 pts
- Situation, turn and conclusion is present: 3 pts
- A Theme is present: 1 pts
- Total: 10 pts

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**Sources:**

http://www.ahapoetry.com

http://chosonkorea.org

http://www.sejongculturalsociety.org