

SPARKS

Hero's Secret Lair Haikus

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GRADES 5–8

TYPE

**FANTASY/SCIFI
POETRY
STEM**

In this Spark, students will write haikus from two different perspectives, one of a hero and one of an engineer, to design a secret lair for a superhero.

WHAT YOUR STUDENTS WILL LEARN

Students will learn the format of a haiku.

WHAT YOU WILL DO

Before you begin:

- Write the example haikus in STEP 2 on chart paper for students to see and refer to.
- Determine how you will pair students for writing in STEP 3. You can assign pairs or allow students to self-select partners.

STEP 1 (5 minutes)

Share with students the writing they will do and build interest.

- Heroes have some of the most amazing shelters around—secret lairs that conceal their secret identity, protect them from supervillains, and allow them to rest and recuperate (and sometimes study or invent) between adventures.
- Ask students to share examples of heroes' secret lairs.

- Share with students that today they are going to write haikus that are client-engineer conversations between a hero (the client) and the designer of the hero's secret lair (the engineer). They will work in pairs and have the opportunity to write from both perspectives.

Define *haiku* with students.

- Ask students what they know about the word *haiku*. Have they heard it before? In what situation? Define *haiku*, adding to the ideas generated by students.
 - Type of poem, originally from Japan
 - 3 lines and 17 syllables
 - 1st line: 5 syllables
 - 2nd line: 7 syllables
 - 3rd line: 5 syllables

Educator Note: Students need to be able to accurately count syllables to write a haiku. If you anticipate your students will need support doing this, you can provide a list of words and identify the number of syllables in each word as needed or check in with a small group of students during writing to provide additional support.

STEP 2 (10 minutes)

Explain the directions to students.

- The first two lines will be a client request from a hero.

- Example 1
 - Help build my lair please. (5 syllables)
 - I need to heal after fights. (7 syllables)
- Example 2
 - I need to hide out (5 syllables)
 - Where the Fox Man can't get me! (7 syllables)
- The third line will be from the perspective of an engineer, in response to the request.
 - Example 1
 - Look, infirmary! (5 syllables)
 - Example 2
 - Have these iron walls! (5 syllables)

Educator Note: If you anticipate your students will need additional inspiration before writing, students can use the Secret Lair Brainstorming prompts on page 3 of the handout to generate ideas.

STEP 3 (20 minutes)

Students can use pages 1–2 of the [Hero's Secret Lair Haikus Handout](#) for writing.

- Encourage your students to write as many first and second lines as possible, taking on the persona of their hero client.
- Once students have finished writing the lines as the client, have them hand their partial haikus to a partner, who, as the engineer, will write final lines with resolutions to the problems. The completed haikus should be returned to the first author, the client.

- Finally, the client will read the completed haikus and decide which of the engineer's solutions they like best.

STEP 4 (5 minutes)

Give students the opportunity to share their haikus with the class. Students can share in pairs and/or small groups to allow for more student participation. As students listen to each other's poems, have them identify the client's request and the engineer's response.

Want to Keep Writing? Optional Writing Prompt!

- Imagine that your hero has to get a quick note to their friends to let them know they are safe and hidden. Using the haiku structure (3 lines, 17 syllables), write another secret lair haiku from the perspective of your hero that acts as a secret message to their friends and family. How can you reveal your hero's location and surroundings without giving away too much? How will they know your hero is safe? Go!
- Students can write their haikus on page 4 of the handout. A student example is provided on page 5.

MATERIALS

- Chart paper for the examples in STEP 2
- [Hero's Secret Lair Haikus Handout](#)
 - 1 copy of pages 1–2 per student
 - Optional: 1 copy of pages 3–5 per student