

## Haiku poems

by Jackie Holderness & Annie Hughes

**Level 2** • Beginner–Elementary

**Age:** Primary (6–11)

**Language aims:** To introduce children to short poems in English; to revise the present simple; to introduce syllables

**Time:** 20–30 minutes

**Student grouping:** Groups, whole class

**Materials:** One copy of the worksheet per student

**Language focus:** *School bus, train, plane, car, taxi, boat, van, lorry, tunnel, air; carries, takes, runs, flies; seats, wheels, tracks; big, straight, full*

### Procedure

#### Step 1

Tell the children that they are going to read some poems in English. Tell them that the poems are short and that they describe things that they know about. They are going to guess what it is the poems are describing.

#### Step 2

Give each child a worksheet and let the children read them quietly to themselves.

#### Step 3

Put the children into groups of three. Each child reads out one poem and the group guesses what it is about.

#### Step 4

Now you read out poem 1 and ask the whole class what they think it is about (*a school bus*). Do the same with poems 2 (*train*) and 3 (*plane*).

#### Step 5

Now write up poem 1 on the board in large letters. Explain what a syllable is and give examples, such as *me* = 1 syllable, *mother* = 2 syllables, *tomorrow* = 3 syllables, *especially* = 4 syllables. With the class, decide how many syllables are in each line of the poem, then underline the syllables.

#### Step 6

Now show them how the 'haiku' is created: the first line is five syllables; the second line is seven syllables; the third line is five syllables again. Tell them that these poems are Japanese and are always written in this way. Remind the children that it is not the number of words that matters but the number of syllables. There could be a line with only one word in it if it had five syllables, such as *exasperated!*

#### Step 7

Ask the children to count how many syllables there are in their names – *Tony* = 2, *Mario* = 3, *Antoinette* = 4, *Anne* = 1, etc.

#### Step 8

Children are going to write a haiku by using the poems as a model and by counting the syllables in each line. Write another of the haikus from the worksheet on the board for them to see how to follow the model and count the syllables. Give them some titles on the board, such as 'Car', 'Plane', 'Home', 'Library' or 'Classroom' and walk around helping as they write their poems.

#### Step 9

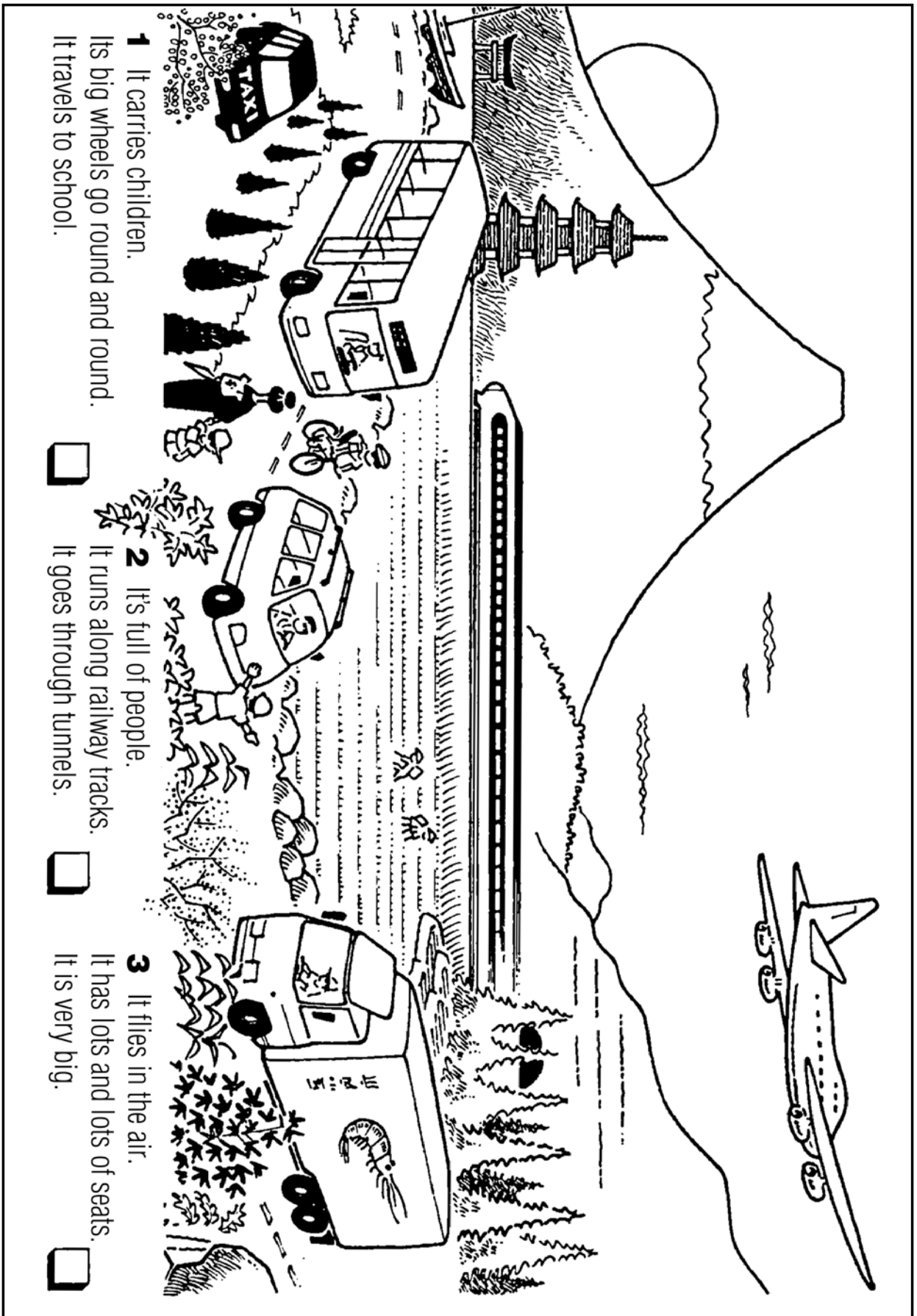
When the children have finished, ask if any want to read their haikus out aloud. Tell them not to give the class the title and the others must guess what it is about. As you listen, check they have used the right number of syllables.

### Follow-up activity

Create a class haiku book and put a copy of each haiku in it.

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1 It carries children.  
Its big wheels go round and round.  
It travels to school.

2 It's full of people.  
It runs along railway tracks.  
It goes through tunnels.

3 It flies in the air.  
It has lots and lots of seats.  
It is very big.