**Gyotaku Lesson Plan**  
  
  
**Theme/Subject  
http://www.oberlin.edu/amam/asia/graphics/title-underline.gif**  
***Gyotaku*** (guh-yo-tah-koo) is the Japanese art of fish painting. “gyo” means fish and “taku” means impression. It was developed more than a century ago as a fisherman's method of recording the size and species of his catch. Freshly caught fish were painted with a non-toxic ink, and covered with a piece of rice paper. The paper was then carefully smoothed down, and removed to make an exact size copy of the fish. Once the print was completed, the fish could be washed and prepared for a meal. By using this technique, Japanese fishermen were able to both record and eat their catch.  
  
Since its functional beginning, Gyotaku has become an art form. Prints are no longer just plain black ink outlines, but colorful reproductions of the original species. Gyotaku art has been displayed at museums around the world.  
  
***Haiku*** is a form of poetry that developed in Japan from about 400 years ago. The style reached a peak in the first half of the Edo period (1603-1868), when a poet named Matsuo Basho wrote verses during his journeys around the country describing the seasons and the scenery of the places he visited.   
  
In the Meiji period (1868-1912) *haiku* developed as a uniquely Japanese form of poetry under the influence of another poet, Masaoka Shiki. Shiki promoted a new form of *haiku* that emphasized realistic portrayals of nature and human life.  
  
A *haiku* is a short verse of 17 syllables, divided into units of five, seven, and five syllables. *Haiku* use simple expressions to convey deeply felt emotions and a sense of discovery to the reader. As a rule, a *haiku* must have a word that is identified with a particular season.

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-9-12/Haiku_Learning_and_Sharing.aspx> This link will take you to Artsedge which has a high school lesson on creating Haiku.

**Objectives/Concepts  
http://www.oberlin.edu/amam/asia/graphics/title-underline.gif**

1. Students will learn to look long and carefully as they create exact replicas of fish. Students will familiarize themselves with the printing process of Gyotaku.
2. Students will learn about the history and culture of the Japanese fisherman at the end of the Edo period.
3. Students will learn how to use printing materials properly.
4. Students will practice writing haiku and understand syllables and pattern in poetry.
5. Students will select one final print on which to write their haiku and display.

**Academic Content Standards  
http://www.oberlin.edu/amam/asia/graphics/title-underline.gif**  
**National**

1. National Council for Social Studies
   * Culture People Places and Environment
   * Individual Development and Identity
2. National Arts Standards

1. NA-VA.K-4.1 Standard #1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

2. NA-VA.K-4.3 Standard #3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

1. NA-VA.K-4.4 Standard #4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
2. National Science Education Standards
3. Characteristics of organisms
4. Organisms and environments

**Florida**

1. Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in Art

* VA.912.C.3.3: Examine relationships among social, historical, literary, and/or other references to explain how they are assimilated into artworks.
* VA.912.S.1.1: Use innovative means and perceptual understanding to communicate through varied content, media and art techniques.
* VA.912.S.1.4: Interpret and reflect on cultural and historical events to create art.
* VA.912.H.1.4: Apply background knowledge and personal interpretation to discuss cross-cultural connections among various artworks and the individuals, groups, cultures, events and/or traditions they reflect.

**Vocabulary  
http://www.oberlin.edu/amam/asia/graphics/title-underline.gif**  
***Gyotaku***  
The Japanese art of printing fish.  
  
***Haiku***  
Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry; often centered around nature and natural things in the universe. The pattern for Haiku is the following:  
Line 1: 5 syllables;  
Line 2: 7 syllables;  
Line 3: 5 syllables

For example:

Silently swimming

Through the depths of the water

Deep within the stream (written by Linda Cummings)

**Materials for Studio Activity   
http://www.oberlin.edu/amam/asia/graphics/title-underline.gif**

* Rubber Fish models (can be borrowed from the Fine Arts Coordinator)
* Water-based Inks (black, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple)
* Large, Medium, and Small paintbrushes (such as sizes 4, 8, and 12 round)
* Newsprint
* Rice paper or White construction paper
* Pencils

**Explore  
http://www.oberlin.edu/amam/asia/graphics/title-underline.gif**  
Students can the story *Kogi's Mysterious Journey* by Elizabeth Partridge, Illustrated by Aki Sogabe. They will learn about the history of Gyotaku and its transition into an art form. Students will examine the body of the fish and note its different parts, particularly the gills, scales, fins, and eyes. Students will also be learning about haiku and create an original haiku to accompany their fish print.  
  
**Create  
http://www.oberlin.edu/amam/asia/graphics/title-underline.gif**  
Students will create their own fish prints!

1. Select your fish!
2. Place fish (flat side down) on top of newsprint.
3. Using the colored water-based inks provided, paint your rubber fish with the appropriate size paint brush.
   * Make sure to cover the entire surface of the fish—include the eyes, fins, and all the scales!
   * Spread the ink evenly over the fish so that only a thin yet solid layer shows.
4. Visually line your white paper up over the fish so that the fish is positioned where you would like it to print. Place on top of fish.
5. Press firmly, covering the entire fish's surface.
   * Important: Do not let the paper move!
6. Carefully remove the paper and set aside to dry.
7. Repeat if desired!

Assessment **http://www.oberlin.edu/amam/asia/graphics/title-underline.gif**  
Have students complete a self-assessment or engage in a group discussion regarding the process of Gyotaku. Use elements of art and principles of design to describe their work.  
  
Closure **http://www.oberlin.edu/amam/asia/graphics/title-underline.gif**  
Have students present their haiku and fish prints to the class!  
  
Across the Curriculum  **http://www.oberlin.edu/amam/asia/graphics/title-underline.gif**  
**Language Arts**  
Have students write haiku to be written neatly on fish print. Turn haiku into Tantra by adding the last two lines: each 7 syllables long.  
  
**Science**  
Study the anatomy of the fish in their prints! Have students label parts of the fish.

Fish Anatomy: Most fish have five kinds of fins. The dorsal fins run down the middle of the fish’s back. The fin closest to the head is the spiny dorsal fine. The spines are very sharp if your prick your finger on them. The fin on the back near the tail is the soft dorsal fin. The caudal fin is on the fail. A fish uses it caudal fin for swimming. The pelvic fins are usually on the lower part of the body, right below the pectoral fins. The pectoral fins are behind the gills. The pectoral fins are like the arms of the body and the pelvis fins are likethe legs. Finally, the anal fin is on the lower side of the fish near the tail. Both the anal and pelvic fins act like brakes for the fish. All the fins help the fish keep its balance in the water.

All freshwater fish have a gill cover that protects the gills. This gill cover is very bony.

A lateral line runs down the side of the fish. The sense organs are located along this line and are used for detecting vibrations.

Create an appropriate habitat for the particular species of fish.

**Music**  
Have students clap the beats of their haiku. Turn haiku into songs!

Credits:

Designed by Loren Fawcett, Education Assistant, Allen Memorial Art Museum

Adapted to the Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards by Linda Cummings, Fine Arts Coordinator, Collier County Public Schools