

# Sijo (Korean Poetry)

(for students)

The image shows three overlapping cards. The left card is titled 'Sijo Example' and features a poem by Kim Sangyong. The middle card is titled 'Ohio Sijo Student Competition Information' and is divided into 'Details' and 'Prizes' sections. The right card is titled 'Basics' and lists 'Sijo Pauses' and 'Sijo Syllables'.

### Sijo Example

  
"Love," it is a lying word.  
That you love me, another lie.  
"The loved one is seen in dreams."  
That is still a greater lie.  
How can I, who can never sleep,  
hope to see you in my dreams?  
-Kim Sangyong (1561-1637)

### Ohio Sijo Student Competition Information

#### Details

**Age Divisions**  
Elementary/middle (grades 6-8)  
high school (9-12)

**Submission**  
Original submissions online

**Deadline**  
May 1, 2021

**Judging**  
Results announced in May

  
<http://easc.osu.edu/sijo>

#### Prizes

Category	Prize
Middle/Elementary School	First Place: \$250 Second Place: \$150
High School	First Place: \$250 Second Place: \$150
Sponsoring Teacher	\$500 in classroom-related materials on Korea

  
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EAST ASIAN STUDIES CENTER

#### Basics:

##### Sijo Pauses

A. 3 lines, 4 parts each line, major pause in middle, small pause between other sections.

##### Sijo Syllables

A. 44-46 syllables total, 14-16 per line.  
B. Lines 1 & 2: similar syllable count and content  
Line 3: different syllable count and content (twist)

# What is Sijo (시조)?

Sijo (pronounced SHEE-jo) is a Korean verse of three lines (sometimes each line is split for 6 lines total) with 14-16 syllables each for a total of 44-46 syllables, originally meant to be sung.

“With its three lines, sijo resembles haiku, but the sijo poet has more room to develop a theme, narrative, or image before twisting and resolving it in the final line. Each line of 14 or 15 syllables consists of a string of four shorter phrases of three, four, or five syllables apiece.” David McCann

Irene, Sege. “The Sijo Poetry Form Captures a Harvard Professor’s Imagination - The Boston Globe.” Boston.Com, Boston.com, 30 June 2009,

[http://archive.boston.com/lifestyle/articles/2009/06/30/the\\_sijo\\_poetry\\_form\\_captures\\_a\\_harvard\\_professor8217s\\_imagination/](http://archive.boston.com/lifestyle/articles/2009/06/30/the_sijo_poetry_form_captures_a_harvard_professor8217s_imagination/)



# Fun Facts about the word “Sijo”

Where did the word “Sijo” originate?

- Originally, in Korea, all written communication was in Chinese, while Korean was used for speaking. Sijo poems were intended to be sung.
- Early books describe the *tang’ga* “short lyric” for the words, *sijo* for the tune.
- Sijo now written with two Chinese characters meaning “time/period” and “song.” The word “Sijo” was first used by Cho’oe Namson in the 1920s.

# Sijo Examples: Historic



“Love,” It is a lying word.  
That you love me, another lie.  
“The loved one is seen in dreams.”  
That is still a greater lie.  
How can I, who can never sleep,  
hope to see you in my dreams?  
-Kim Sangyong (1561-1637)



Though I die, and die again;  
Though I die one hundred deaths;  
Long after my bones have turned to dust;  
whether my soul exists or not;  
My one red heart, forever and always loyal  
to my lord, will never fade away.  
-Chǒng Mong-ju (1337-1392)

# Sijo Examples: Modern



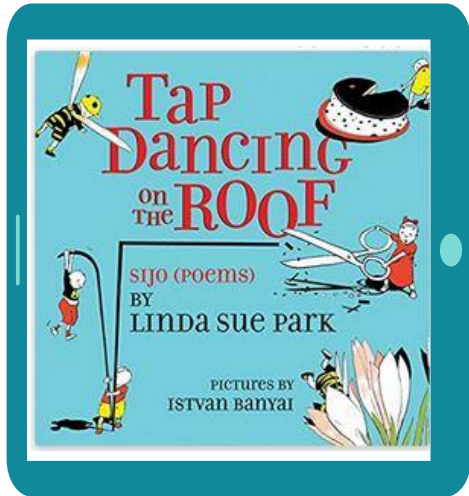
## EVEN NOW

Just us two in the photograph  
his arm around my thin shoulder  
That strong limb I then leaned against  
would break so many falls  
We stood like this but only once  
but his strength holds me still  
-Elizabeth St Jacques (1995)



A welcome weekend at Cedar Key,  
relaxing on the dock;  
pelicans wait poker-faced  
for bait fish we may leave behind.  
Bob away, line, while I watch the sun  
going back to water.  
-Larry Gross (1996)

# Sijo Examples (Youtube)



Click book to hear 4 selections read

**Linda Sue Park (from *Tap Dancing on the Roof*)**

## **Breakfast**

For this meal, people like what they like, the same every morning.

Toast and coffee, Bagel and juice. Cornflakes and milk in a white bowl.

Or--- warm, soft, and delicious----- a few extra minutes in bed

<http://easc.osu.edu/sijo>

# Sijo Examples (Youtube)



[Click to hear 10 poems from Experience Korea: Ten Poems of the Joseon Dynasty](#)

# Possible Sijo Topics:

What is going on in your school or classroom?

What are students talking about?

What is on the news or current events?

Nature or Seasons?

Sports or Hobbies?



# Sijo Basics:

## Writing Sijo

What can be the twist to the subject or theme? Sijo were originally sung - think of rhythm with words and phrases. How to convey/capture emotion?

## Sijo Flow

- A. Line 1: Introduces subject/ theme
- B. Line 2: Develops subject/theme
- C. Line 3: Twist or anti-theme

## Sijo Pauses

- A. 3 lines, 4 parts each line, major pause in middle, small pause between other sections.
- B. Punctuation helps with sections.

## Sijo Syllables

- A. 44- 46 syllables total, 14-16 per line.
- B. Lines 1 & 2: similar syllable count and content
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# Brainstorming your poem

**What is your topic?**

Write here...

---

---

---

---

**What happens next  
(development)?**

Write here...

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---

---

---

**What is happening (situation)?**

Write here...

---

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---

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**What is the twist?**

Write here...

---

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---

---

# Build your poem

3
4
4
4
3
4
4
4
3
5
4
3

Situation

Development

Twist



# The final draft



Write here...

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

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What is the syllable count per line (14-16) and total (44-46)? Is it written in 3 or 6 lines? Is there a twist in the last line?

# Sijo Poem Syllable Count - Basic

	Section 1	Section 2		Section 3	Section 4
Line 1 (14-16)	3	4	B r e a k	4 (or 3)	4
Line 2 (14-16)	3	4		4 (or 3)	4
Line 3 (14-16)	3	5		4	3

“Love.” It is / a lying word. // That you love me / another lie.

“The loved one / is seen in dreams.” // That is still / a greater lie.

How can I, / who can never sleep, // hope to see you / in my dreams?

# Sijo Poem Syllable Count - Basic Example

	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4
Line 1	“Love.” It is	a lying word.	That you love me	another lie.
Line 2	“The loved one	is seen in dreams.”	That is still	a greater lie.
Line 3	How can I,	who can never sleep,	hope to see you	in my dreams?

-Kim Sangyong (1561-1637)

# Sijo Review:

## Writing Sijo

What can be the twist to the subject or theme? Sijo were originally sung - think of rhythm with words and phrases. How to convey/capture emotion?

## Sijo Flow

- A. Line 1: Introduces subject/ theme
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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?

**—Yun Seondo (1587-1671)**



# Resources

## Background and Overview

- [The Sijo, A Window into Korean Culture](#)
- [Sijo Primer by Larry Gross](#)
- [Korean Sijo](#) (see pg 8: And it Goes Like This: Sijo at a Glance)
- [SijoPoetry.com](#)

## Examples of Traditional and Modern Sijo

- [Sijo Masters in Translation](#)
- [Sijo - Aha Poetry](#)
- [New Sijo Poem Examples - Poetry Soup](#)

## Listen to Sijo

- [Tap Dancing on the Roof:](#)
- All Ages: [Experience Korea](#)
- Traditional Sijo sung '[Cheongsanri](#)'

# References

- Rutt, Richard. *The Bamboo Grove: An introduction to Sijo*. U of Michigan Press, 1998.
- McCann, David. “[The Sijo, a Window into Korean Culture](#),” *Education About Asia, Volume 15, Number 1*, Spring 2010, pp. 53-54.
- Stoltenberg, Amy. “[Korean Sijo: Poetry by Chong Mong-Ju, Hwang Chini, Yi Sun-Sin, and Other Sijo Poets](#),” Lesson Plan, August 2010.
- The Sejong Cultural Society. [Sijo: Korean Poetry Form](#), Powerpoint Presentation.
- Gross, Larry. [SIJOFORUM PRIMER #1: An introduction for those new to sijo, a refresher for others](#). Lesson Plan.
- Irene, Sege. “The Sijo Poetry Form Captures a Harvard Professor’s Imagination - The Boston Globe.” Boston.Com, Boston.com, 30 June 2009,  
[http://archive.boston.com/lifestyle/articles/2009/06/30/the\\_sijo\\_poetry\\_form\\_captures\\_a\\_harvard\\_professor8217s\\_imagination/](http://archive.boston.com/lifestyle/articles/2009/06/30/the_sijo_poetry_form_captures_a_harvard_professor8217s_imagination/)

# Sijo

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