

Physics is a very mathematical science. Yet paradoxically, physicists are often very poetical people. Poets, after all, distill the most meaning into the fewest words – just like the laws of physics.

Physics Haiku

The first line traditionally introduces a person and a location, and usually ends with the name of the location, though sometimes with that of the person. A true limerick is supposed to have a kind of twist to it. This may lie in the final line, or it

*Newton pushes wall
Wall pushes back on Newton
Third Law in action*

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry. As written by English poets, haiku has three lines of 5-7-5 syllables.

Another form of short poetry is the limerick. The rhyme scheme is usually aabba, with a rather rigid meter. The first, second, and fifth lines are three metrical feet; the third and fourth two metrical feet. The foot used is usually the amphibrach, a stressed syllable between two unstressed ones. However it can be considered an anapestic foot, two short syllables and then a long, the reverse of dactyl rhythm. However, many substitutions are common.

may lie in the way the rhymes are often intentionally tortured, or in both. Though not a strict requirement, the best limericks are usually those that additionally show some form of internal rhyme, often alliteration, sometimes assonance or another form of rhyme.¹

There was a young lady called Bright
Who could travel much faster than light.
She set out one day
In a relative way
And returned on the previous night.

Arthur Buller in *Punch*, 19 Dec. 1923

¹ Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limerick_%28poetry%29

Your Assignment

Write five haiku or limericks about physics topics that you have studied. Present these poems in poster form. The style of the poster should match the tone of your poems.

Evaluation

You will be marked according to the following criteria:

Physics: Does your poem capture the essence of the physics concept it is conveying? Is the physics correct?

Poetry: Are the rhyme and meter of your poems correct? Do they scan properly? Are they easy to say aloud? (Both haiku and limericks are spoken poems.)

Artistry: Is your poster decorated in a style matching your poems? Are your poems easy to read?

All of the above criteria are equally important.

