

PERSONIFICATION

Personification is the assignment of human characteristics to non-human things.

Purpose:

To write a free verse poem using personification to make a "thing" seem like a person.

Materials:

One piece of lined notebook paper
Pencil or pen
Copy of the formula poem questions
Timer

Procedure:

1. Fold a piece of notebook paper in half lengthwise. With the fold on the right, create a list of "things," (i.e., sky, trash, and chocolate). You will have three minutes. Remember to think outside the box. For example: things in your house or yard, things in space, things you might see while in the woods or by a river, things in a gym or amusement park.
2. Turn the paper over and create a list of verbs, actions a person does, (i.e., sing, sneeze, call).
What can you do beside hop, skip, jump?
What do you do to a ball?
What do you do when you are sick or have a cold?
3. Unfold the paper so that you can see the object and verb column at the same time. Create, in the next three minutes, some short personification sentences using these two lists:
 Sky sings.
 Trash sneezes.
 Chocolate calls.
4. Allow some students to share before moving on to step 5.
5. Now make these sentences longer by answering: Who? What? Where? When? Why? or How? Choose 3 to 5 of your two word sentences from your list. What you are doing is writing using personification. You are taking an inanimate object and giving it human characteristics, which is exactly the meaning of personification.

Sky sings (*How?*) in harmony with the moon.

Trash sneezes (*Why?*) because I leave it on the porch for two weeks.

Chocolate calls (*Who?*) me, but I try not to listen.

6. Allow some students to share before moving on to step 7.
7. Choose a different object, color, or an emotion than the ones you used in the above activity. Using the back of your paper, write it on the top of the page.
8. Answer the following questions. Start with the words, "I am," or begin sentences with the name of the object. Be sure to write in complete sentences.
 - What are you? *"I am pen."*
 - Where do you live? *"I live at the bottom of your desk drawer."*
 - What are your favorite colors?
 - What clothes do you like to wear?
 - What is your job?
 - Who are your family and friends?
 - Where do you go on vacation?
 - What is your favorite holiday?
 - How do you move?
9. You may find that you will not have an answer for one of the questions, skip it.
10. Put your answers together to create a poem.

"My Friends"

I am the ocean,
salty and swirling.
My cousins are the rivers,
the seas, and the lakes.
When I don't have company,
I wave at the sky
because I know
moon or sun will wave back.

~ Nicholas Quint

"Pickles"

Pickles like to gossip with their friends
In pickle barrels
Rubbing shoulders
Bumping hips
Bobbing in the waves.
They talk excitedly all at once
Happy and safe in their life preservers,
Slurring, glurring, gulping
Giggling, wiggling, juggling
In their vinegar sea.

~ Katie Chalfant

"Dinner"

Knife was the first to speak.
He was known mostly for his sharp cutting remarks.

Chairs sat down underneath the table.
Napkins folded themselves into their laps.

Teapot, unable to stand the tension, began to boil.

Cup held one hand on her hip
Knowing she could hold her own.

Fork and spoon huddled off to the side next to plate.
They knew plate could handle whatever was dished out.

~ Terry Garrison

"Nose"

I am a nose.
I live on a head.
I wear nothing.
My job is to smell
and my hobby is sneezing.
My friends are other noses.
On vacation, I go to Nose York.

I feel nosy.

~ John Saxon