

Lesson Plan Title: Personification

Concept / Topic To Teach: How to use personification in student writing.

Standards Addressed: California State Board of Education, English Language Arts, 1997*

General Goal(s): To teach student the use personification in literature through applied practice in a student composition.

Specific Objectives: Use of personification student writing. Students learn to think of objects as persons and write about these objects in a short poem composition.

Required Materials: Sample Poem Examples‡
Character Web Worksheet
Sharp Pencil and Composition Paper

Time: One Hour

Anticipatory Set (Lead-In): Write the word “person” on the whiteboard. Check background knowledge. Ask students to define what a “person” is. Reward good oral responses. Write the ending “ify” to the end of the word “person” on board. Ask students if they know what “ify” does to a noun. Ask students: “Does anyone like to drink a smoothie?” Tell them that to make a smoothie, they must liquefy the ingredients. Tell them that “ify” means to “make into.” Ask students: “Does anyone know the word ‘magnify’?” Ask them to define it. Tell them that today they will “personify” an object of their choice. Erase the “y” from the word “personify” on the board, and write at the end “ication” so that the word on the board shown is “personification.” Tell them that once they have completed the act of personifying an object, what they have made is a personification of that thing –a noun. Define personification for class.

Step-By-Step Procedure:

Format: Example poems, discussion. Group participation. Individual writing.
Reading and brief discussion of the example poems (appropriate to grade level).

Explain that in poetry, an author will often times personify an object or idea.

Pass out Character Web worksheet to all students and have pencil and composition paper on student desks.

Draw a square on the board, with ovals surrounding, to model the worksheet on student desks.

Ask students whether there are any musicians in the class. Raise of hands. “What instrument do you play? (Piano.) Write oral response in square. Ask students if they like

to make art? “What kind of art do you make?” Ask student to tell you the name of a tool that he uses to make art with. (Paintbrush.) Write it in square on board. Ask students their favorite color (Green.) Write in square on board. There are now three responses written on board inside the square: piano, paintbrush, green. Students may be prompted for objects they use in sports, hobbies, travel.

Tell students that you are going to make a personification of the first object in the square (piano).

“If the piano had a best friend, whom would it be? Raise of hands. Write student oral response in ONE of any of the four of the ovals connected to the square. Reward good oral responses (guitar). Ask students: “What do the guitar and piano do together as friends?” Write oral response below the word guitar in the oval. Read aloud the sentence: “The Piano’s best friend is the Guitar and together they play in a band.”

Ask the students, were they to smell the piano, how does it smell? Write oral responses in any SECOND oval outside the square. “The piano smells like ocean waves.” Write complete sentence in oval. Read aloud the two sentences: “Piano’s best friend is Guitar. He smells like ocean waves.”

Turn to class and ask them to write the name of an object (single noun) in the square on their worksheet at desk. Ask for oral responses for the words they have written. Ask them “If the thing you have written in the square had a best friend, whom would it be?” Ask them to write oral responses in ONE of the ovals on the worksheet. Ask for oral responses to give students the opportunity to say aloud their ideas. Reward good responses. (“The soccer ball’s best friend is the shoe. Together they win games.” Or, “The paintbrush’s best friend is the color red, and together they paint a picture of the moon.”)

Return to board. Point out the other two words in the square (paintbrush, green). Point out that the same questions you asked of the piano could be asked of paintbrush or green. Model responses to the questions: Paintbrush’s best friend is Canvas. Green’s best friend is Yellow.

Now turn to the class and ask them “What makes a piano happy?” Write best oral response inside the THIRD oval on board. “A piano is happiest when he is playing F#m.” Verbally model and conjoin all three sentences for the students. “Piano’s best friend is Guitar. Together they play in a band. Piano is happiest when playing F#m.”

Ask students to write a sentence in the THIRD oval on worksheet describing what brings happiness to the subject they have written in the square on their worksheet.

For the final oval, give the students several options. Write on the board the following:

Jealous of ...

Embarrassed if ...

Proud of ...

Magic ... (if a piano could make magic, what would it do?)

Afraid of ...

Loves ...

Happiest when ...

Lost and found ... (if a piano lost something, what would it be?)

Add to the above list or shorten it, depending on grade level.

Explain that one of the most fundamental aspects of our being human is our feelings. Tell them that poetry often, but not always, is about feelings. Write a short list of feelings on the board (love, joy, anger, sadness, happiness, fear). Add to the above list or shorten it, depending on grade level.

Ask the class “Were the piano to fall in love, with whom would it fall in love?” Reward good responses. Tell them that, in their own writing, they are to use ONE of the words of feeling you have written on the board. Add or shorten the list of emotions, depending on grade level.

Pick one topic from the list on board and point to it. (Magic). Make up a sentence. “When Piano makes magic, he changes music into birds.”

Ask students to write a sentence in the FOURTH oval describing an answer to one of the prompts from the list above.

Students are ready to write poem. Tell them they are to transfer their answers from their worksheets to the composition paper in ANY ORDER they choose. Tell them to pick their favorite response from the worksheet and use THAT line as their starter line.

Ten minute silent writing.

Circle room to check for student progress and further prompt slow writers.

About SEVEN minutes into the silent writing exercise, announce to the whole class the following. “Consider now that the thing you are writing about is YOU. Finish your poem and make a statement about the subject, but as you write, think that you are writing about YOU.

Allow students several more minutes to finish writing poems.

As you circle room, read (to yourself) the student writing-in-progress. Encourage and ask for further details.

End silent writing time.

Ask for VOLUNTEERS to come to front and share writing. Do not force anyone to share if he does not feel comfortable.

Author at front of class may ask the class for raise of hands to give oral response to author's poem. "What do you like about my poem?" Encourage all responses to author. Give author at front the opportunity to pick students with raised hands.

Plan For Independent Practice: Ask students to revise and complete poems.

Closure (Reflect Anticipatory Set): Ask class how they may use what they have learned about personification in other school writing assignments. Ask class to illustrate poems with drawings.

Assessment Based On Objectives: Did student write at least four sentences of personification for their subject? Did they answer some of the questions on the board? Did the students write in complete sentences? Did student give details? Did student use words for emotion? Were students enthusiastic about sharing their writing aloud with class at the end of exercise? Did students have fun?

Adaptations and Modifications (For Students With Learning Disabilities). Special Education: Reduce number of responses from four to two (best friend, favorite activity). Allow students to use phrases rather than complete sentences. Consult with IEP to apply learning objectives for Reading/Writing to this lesson. Ask "early finishers" to collaborate with "late finishers" and act as scribe. Early finisher writes down oral response from "late finisher" on worksheet. Teacher takes dictation from Special Ed. student oral responses and writes oral responses for student on worksheet.

ELL/ELD: Ask for images of cultural artifacts, sports, hobbies, foods from students' native culture.

Extensions (For Gifted Students): GATE students write more than ten lines. Ask them to use more than one word for emotion in composition. Illustrate compositions when complete. Place compositions on poster paper and hang throughout the classroom.

Possible Connections To Other Subjects: Cross-discipline with science, history, math. Ask students to pick subject from another discipline and describe that subject as a person. For math: were the number seven to have a best friend, whom would it be? What would the two friends do together? With whom would the number seven fall in love? If seven had an aroma, describe it? If an historical event had a favorite color, describe the color and tell why.

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* California ELA Contents Standards

Grade Four: Reading

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

3.5 Define figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification) and identify its use in literary works.

Grades Eleven and Twelve: Reading

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

3.4 Analyze ways in which poets use imagery, personification, figures of speech, and sounds to evoke readers' emotions.

‡ Sample Poems

Piano

Piano gets lonely
when there are no vibrations
on her stings.
She feels the smoothness
of her keys.
She feels herself
getting embarrassed
when a bad chord is played.
She is in love with F#m.
Her joy is when her
singer sings along.

Green

Green is not afraid.
He is bright and shiny.
If red were to go to the store
he would buy toothpaste.
If you taste Green, it
would be like orchids.
Green's younger sister
is mean to him.

Character Web Worksheet

CHARACTER WEB WORKSHEET

