

Personification

Companion Text: If You See the Moon, by Zia Wells
Subject Area & Grade Level: Language Arts, 3rd Grade

Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Recognize the use of personification in writing
- Describe reasons why an author might choose to use personification
- Demonstrate understanding of personification by pairing objects with appropriate human-action verbs, and using those phrases in unique sentences

Pre-Writing Activity #1

Read the story to students all the way through without stopping. Then, ask them to name the characters in the story. If they don't name the moon as a character, ask them why they didn't. Then discuss how the moon is characterized, and introduce the term "personification" as a writing technique that authors use to give human attributes to non-human objects or animals. Ask students if they can remember any specific examples of the moon being personified, in the story, and point out a few: "The moon, being rather lonely too, obliged."; "The moon was worried."; "Just then, the moon called out to them..."

Ask students why authors might do this. Are naturally human characters expected to be bound in ways that personified characters are not (i.e. laws of physics, physical movement limitations, behavioral expectations)? What freedom does personification allow an inanimate object (i.e. use of language, ability to move/feel/think, etc.)?

Pre-Writing Activity #2

Have each student take out a piece of paper and neatly list 10 past-tense verbs that describe actions humans can do. Write the following 10 nouns on the board: bracelet, cup, hands, mosquito, rock, soup, tree, book, house, and car. Have students pass their list of verbs to a person sitting near them. Once each student has received a list of verbs, have them try to pair up as many of the nouns from the board with the verbs on their papers as they can, making at least 5 pairs.

Writing Activity

One last time, have students pass their papers to a person near them. Have each student write at least three sentences using three of the pairs they have been given. For example, "My new **bracelet sang** as I walked along the sunny street." When everyone is done with their sentences, invite students to each share one sentence they are most proud of, or one they think is the most interesting. Have students suggest situations in which their sentences could make up part of a larger story.

