

Lesson Plan

Welcome to Personification!

By Joanna Fuhrman

In this lesson, T&W teaching artist [Joanna Fuhrman](#) teaches students about creating poetry that imagines emotions as characters with human traits.



Genre(s) taught: Poetry

Grade(s) taught: 3rd

Common Core State Standards (Refer to the [ELA Standards > Reading: Literature > Grade 3](#)):

- CCSS ELA-Literacy.RL.3.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.
- CCSS ELA-Literacy.RL.3.4: Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.
- CCSS ELA-Literacy.RL.5.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

Guiding Questions:

- What is personification?
- What are the qualities of different emotions?

LESSON

Warm-up Activity (15 minutes):

Part 1:

- Begin by explaining personification to students.
- Provide students with the List of Emotions. Invite students to circle an emotion.
- Hand out stick-on nametags and ask the students to write the emotion that they have selected onto their nametag.
- Invite students to begin to feel the emotion in their body and to explore the emotion physically. Depending on the class, you can invite students to stay at their desks or move

around the room. ASK: How does “sad” feel? How does “sad” sit? Say your name aloud and notice how “sad” says its name.

Part 2:

- Provide students with the List of Nouns. Invite students to circle one noun.
- Hand out stick-on nametags and ask the students to write the noun that they have selected onto their nametag.
- Invite students to begin to feel the noun transform their body and to explore the word physically. Depending on the class, you can invite students to stay at their desks or move around the room. ASK: How does “rain” feel? How does “rain” sit? Say your name aloud and notice how “rain” says its name.

Part 3:

- Invite students to combine the emotion and the noun.
- Hand out stick-on nametags and ask the students to write the emotion and noun that they have selected onto their nametag. (i.e. Sad Rain)
- Invite students to begin to feel the emotion and noun transform their body and to explore the word physically. ASK: How does “Sad Rain” sit? How does “Sad Rain” stand? Say your name aloud and notice how “Sad Rain” says its name.

Mentor Text, Discussion and Modeling (15 minutes):

- Read [Mary Ruefle’s poem “Happiness”](#) and talk about how the concept of Happiness is alive in the poem. Ask students to reflect on how “happiness” is personified in the poem.
- Ask students to consider how Ruefle starts her poem. Note that Ruefle places “happiness” in a field. What does “happiness” do next? How does “happiness” relate to the environment? How does the environment relate to “happiness”?
- Now select another emotion (sad, angry, jealous, or afraid) and write a group poem where the emotion becomes alive through language. After choosing the emotion the group will explore ask the following questions:
 - ✓ How do you walk?
 - ✓ How do you sit?
 - ✓ How do you move?
 - ✓ What noise/noises do you make?

Writing (10 minutes):

- Invite students to write a poem of their own using the handouts and the group poem for inspiration.

Closing (5 minutes):

- Invite students to read their work aloud.
- Ask audience listen carefully to their peers work. ASK: What images do you remember from your classmates’ poems? What could you see in your mind’s eye when you listened to their poems?

Materials:

- List of Emotions
- List of Nouns
- Happiness Poem Handout

Multi-modal Approaches to Learning: Linguistic, Spatial, Interpersonal, Kinesthetic, Existential