



Personification: Giving Human Traits to Non-Human Things

KS4 ENGLISH LITERATURE

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What is Personification?

Personification is a special technique that writers use to bring life and personality to things that aren't actually alive or human. It means giving human qualities—like feelings, actions, or characteristics—to animals, objects, or even forces of nature. When a writer uses personification, they make the reader feel a stronger connection to the story because they can relate to human emotions and experiences.

For example, instead of saying "the wind blew," a writer might say "the wind whispered secrets" or "the rain danced on the roof." These descriptions make us imagine the wind and rain as if they were alive and had feelings. This technique has been used in literature for thousands of years, from ancient poetry to modern children's books.

Think of it like giving your toy or pet a voice in a story. You might describe your football as if it were sad when nobody played with it, or your houseplant as if it were celebrating when you watered it. That's personification!

Why Do Writers Use Personification?

Writers use personification for several important reasons. First, it makes their writing more **vivid and interesting**—it creates mental pictures that stick in your mind. Second, it helps readers **feel emotions** more deeply. If you read that a lonely house "waited for someone to come home," you feel sadder than if it just said "the house was empty."

Third, personification can help writers explain complicated ideas more simply. It can also add humour to a story or make it more magical and fantastical. When nature seems alive and thinking, the whole story feels more adventurous and real in a different way.

Think of it like when your parents use funny voices for pets or toys when telling you a story—suddenly everything feels more fun and interesting!

Examples in Famous Literature

Many famous books and poems use personification brilliantly. In "**The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**" by C.S. Lewis, the trees come alive and fight battles. In poetry, writers describe death as a friend, time as a thief, or hope as a bird with wings. Even in nursery rhymes, we see personification: "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall" treats an egg like a person who can sit.

When you read a book or watch a film, look out for personification. It's one of the most powerful tools writers have to make stories memorable and emotional.