

Activity #4 – Personified Characters

Vocabulary Collectors

personification (noun) — the act of giving **human qualities** to an abstract noun (like *love*) or an inanimate noun (like a *tree* or the *wind*). It's often used by poets.

The Cat & The Fiddle

Hey diddle, Diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon;
The little dog laughed
To see such sport,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

by Mother Goose

Humans laugh; dogs
don't really. That's
why this is one
example of
personification in
this nursery rhyme.



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personification (noun) — the act of giving human qualities to an abstract noun (like *love*) or an inanimate noun (like a *tree* or the *wind*). It's often used by poets.

The Sky is Low, The Clouds are Mean

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

--by Emily Dickinson



What's
being
personified
in this poem

A *diadem* is a jeweled crown that shows power.

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personification (noun) — the act of **giving human qualities** to an abstract noun (like *love*) or an inanimate noun (like a *tree* or the *wind*). It's often used by poets.

The Railway Train

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

To fit its sides, and crawl between
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like horses;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop--docile and omnipotent--
At its own stable door.

--by Emily Dickinson

Personification?
Does this train
have a face?

Do you know
the word
prodigious?

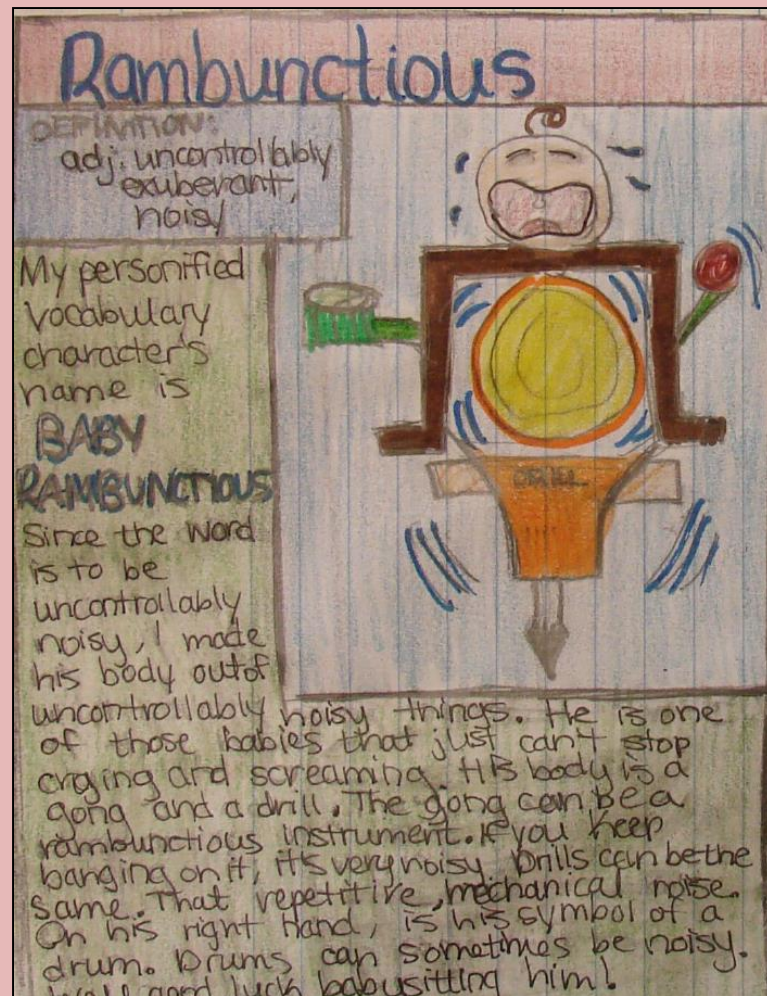
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Imagine one of your vocabulary words as a person—with a **personality**, a **job**, an **outfit**, a **way looking at life**. You will **personify the word**.

- A poetic tool.

This will help you to think more deeply about a word's meaning than you would through rote memorization.

This will make you analyze and write creatively using a new word's meaning.



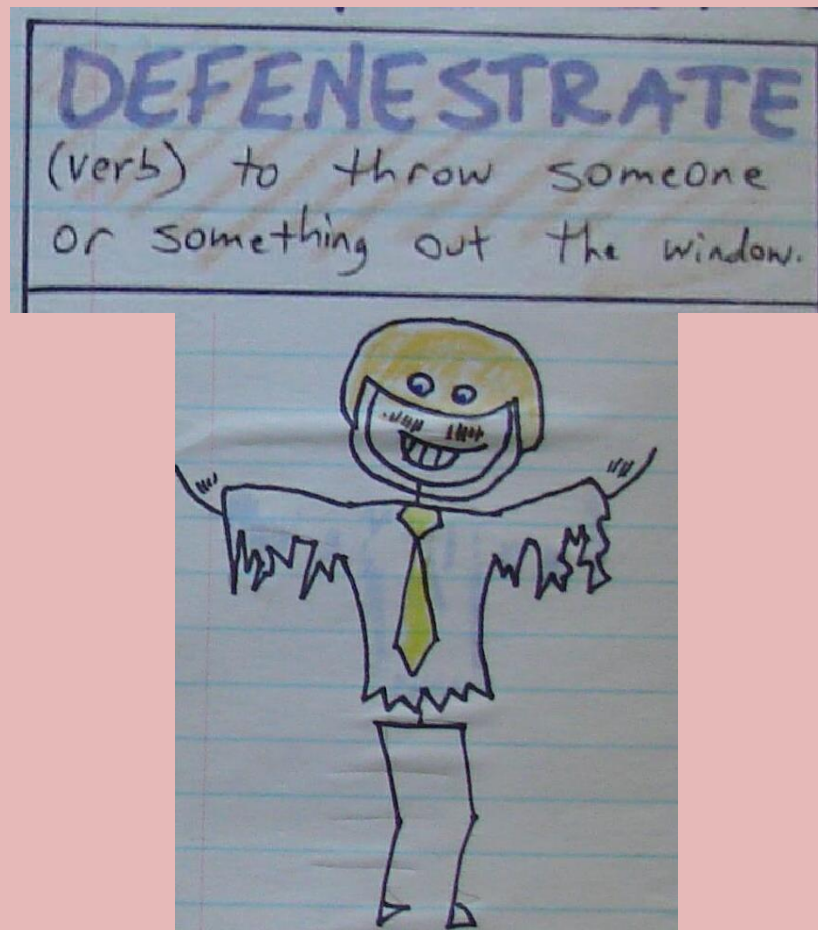
(Click image to see it in larger form on the Internet)

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“But how do I **personify** a **vocabulary word**?”

-Tap into your poetic brain.

1. Ask yourself what kind of person would I associate with that word?



Meet **Mr. Defenestrate**, my visualized stuntman!

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2. Come up with a rough draft of who he is and why his name and appearance fits him.

Mr. Debenestrate is a stuntman, complete with protective helmet in case he is thrown out the window! His suit -- light blue like glass -- is purposely tattered to look like broken shards.

DEFENESTRATE
(verb) to throw someone or something out the window.



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Mr. Defenestrate is a stuntman, complete with protective helmet in case he is thrown out the window! His suit -- light blue like glass -- is purposely tattered to look like broken shards.

defenestrate (verb) — to throw a person or thing out of a window.

noun form: defenestration

Mr. D. Fenestration is a famous Hollywood stuntman. While he's an expert at crashing cars without getting hurt, his favorite movie set request is being thrown out of a window. If there's an old Western being filmed, he always signs up because lots of people are thrown out of windows during the saloon fights. He wears his helmet in public, and his favorite suit has tattered ends, resembling broken glass, in honor of his favorite stunt.



(found in Season of Secrets, page 176.)

Finally I crafted a piece of writing about him on my vocabulary sheet.

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Personified Vocabulary Rubric:

4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
The personification does all of these:	The personification does three of these:	The personification does two of these:	The personification does one of these:
The personified word is visually and neatly represented.	The personified word is visually and neatly represented.	The personified word is visually and neatly represented.	The personified word is visually and neatly represented.
The description is at least 3 sentences.	The description is at least 3 sentences.	The description is at least 3 sentences.	The description is at least 3 sentences.
The description explains the job, the personality, or the mannerisms of the personified word.	The description explains the job, the personality, or the mannerisms of the personified word.	The description explains the job, the personality, or the mannerisms of the personified word.	The description explains the job, the personality, or the mannerisms of the personified word.
The word's definition clearly connects to the personification.	The word's definition clearly connects to the personification.	The word's definition clearly connects to the personification.	The word's definition clearly connects to the personification.

Click [here](#) for a printable version of this rubric for your students.

Meaningful writing activity = personify vocabulary

Personified Character Success Criteria:

- ☐ The word's definition clearly connects to the personification
- ☐ The “person” I created is well thought-out and demonstrates the meaning of my word
- ☐ My description of my person is **at least 3** sentences long and includes the word and words from the definition
- ☐ My description explains a variety of elements about that person (job, personality, lifestyle mannerisms, attitudes)
- ☐ I have included ALL of elements needed for a vocab activity