

LA Week 13 Activity Sheet

B: Personification

Today, let's take a moment to discuss **personification**.

Personification adds human characteristics to objects and animals just like special effects add excitement to a movie, personification adds interest and excitement to a written description.

Personification

Personification gives human qualities to animals or inanimate objects.

Ex. The **wind moaned** and **breathed, speaking** to all that winter is here.

The **sun smiled** on the park, **calling** children from all around to come and play.

The **fire snapped angrily** at the dry trees.

Additional examples include:

- The sun smiled down on our picnic.
- The leaves danced in the wind.
- Time is running out!
- The ancient car groaned into third gear.
- The cloud scattered rain throughout the city.

In the example above, the wind may sound like it moans, but breathing and speaking are human characteristics, which makes this an example of personification. The sentence could have been written as follows: "There is a strong wind, which indicates to everyone that winter is here." Do you see the difference? Which sentence do you prefer?

Below see some examples of personification from *By the Great Horn Spoon!* and from your poetry book. Discuss what they mean and the mental pictures that they create. For each sentence, name the object that is personified and the human quality that it has. Then write two sentences of your own that use personification.

1. "A sailor with a gold ring dancing in his ear was filling a lamp with whale oil."

Object:

Characteristic:

2. "The wind seemed to pick her up and carry her along like a feather."

Object:

Characteristic:

3. "As they walked along Jack kept gazing back at the mountains, the great Sierra Nevadas. They stood dark blue and purple against the hot morning sky."

Object:

Characteristic:

4. "The stagecoach climbed as if it were part mountain goat."

Object:

Characteristic:

5. "The moon, on the breast of the new fallen snow, gave the lustre of midday to objects below."

Object:

Characteristic:

6. "Three little kittens lost their mittens and they began to cry ..."

Object:

Characteristic:

7. "A deep throb ran through the ship—and then another."

Object:

Characteristic:

8. "... While visions of sugar plums danced in their heads ..."

Object:

Characteristic:

Write your own:

9.

10.

C: Prepare for a Gold Nugget's Tale

You have been reading about the California Gold Rush in *By the Great Horn Spoon!* This week you will write a short story about the California Gold Rush. Write it from the perspective of a piece of gold.

Amateur photographers usually shoot pictures from eye level, wherever that may be. Whether they are taking a picture of a mountain off in the distance or a turtle at their feet, they shoot the picture standing up.

Before a professional photographer takes a picture, he or she studies the subject to see which angle will provide the greatest visual interest. Take the turtle for example. Have you seen turtles before? How do you normally view them? From the top, right? That's how you would see a photograph of a turtle shot from eye level when you were standing up.

But suppose you were to squat on the ground and set your camera in such a way that you could take a picture of a turtle from the turtle's eye level. Have you ever seen a turtle from that perspective? How about from under the

turtle—looking up at it as it walked by? Would that be an interesting photograph? Possibly! Far more interesting, certainly, than the common view from up above.

It's the same with writing. Your writing will be more interesting if you can pick an unfamiliar view, a new angle, something that few people have done before. That's why this week's creative expression assignment is to be written from the perspective of a piece of gold. "Everybody" has heard the story from the perspective of a human being. Your challenge is to tell the story in a new and, hopefully, more interesting way by telling it from the perspective of a gold nugget.

As you tell the gold nugget's story, you will need to personify the nugget. Give your nugget a human name, human life, and human problems.

Writers often use pre-writing to organize their thoughts and to develop ideas. In addition to helping them overcome writer's block, pre-writing can help you to focus your ideas, to develop topics, and to organize the order of the content. We will learn about different types of pre-writing as the year progresses. Today for your pre-writing, fill in the form below. In the chart, use the five rows for the five senses that a human has. Remember the nugget "lives" in 1849 in San Francisco. What does the nugget see? Hear? Taste? Smell? Touch? Finally, answer the questions to begin outlining your story.

Setting: Gold Rush territory 1848

Main Character: Gold Nugget:

Name: _____

Add ideas of things that your nugget would experience in each row on the chart.

Write the story from the first person perspective—use "I."

Sight	
Hearing	
Taste	
Feel	
Smell	

General Story Line

I started here ...