

# DAY FOUR | Personification

## Core Curriculum Standards

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### Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details

- RL.7.1** Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.7.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.7.3** Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

### Reading Literature: Craft, and Structure

- RL.7.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

### Reading Informational Text: Craft and Structure

- RI.7.3** Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

### Reading Informational Text: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- RI.7.7** Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).

### Writing: Text Types and Purposes

- W.7.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

### Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration

- SL.7.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL.7.2** Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue.

### Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- SL.7.4** Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

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## Lesson Goals

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### Outcomes

Student will be able to recognize personification in a poem.

### Themes, Issues, and Concepts

hope, dreams, determination, loneliness

### Literary Terms

personification

metaphor

### Materials

“Hope’ is the Thing with Feathers” by Emily Dickinson

“Dreams” by Langston Hughes

Poetry On Their Terms book (2013 edition)

“The Lonely Life of a Letter” by Olivia DuCharme (page 22)

Poetry On Our Terms book (2014 edition)

“The Pen” by Joey Dougherty (page 127)

Poetry On Our Terms book (2015 edition)

“I Am the Penny” by Megan Hulser (page 35)

SchoolTube

TeacherTube

YouTube

Writer’s notebooks for students

### Teacher Tips

- Students seem to enjoy this lesson especially the poem by Olivia Ducharme. This is another great opportunity for students to write and share their poetry. Students can develop their own ideas for “The Lonely Life of a \_\_\_\_\_” (tell students to use their imagination and be creative; the poem doesn’t have to be about a letter).
- Collaborate as a class to create a unique version of “The Lonely Life of a Teacher, Student, etc.”

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## Lesson Plan

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### DO NOW (5 minutes)

To warm up, read the definition of “personification”. Ask students to write down several examples of personification. Cartoons are great examples of personification, like Spongebob Squarepants. You can explain to them that personification means giving human traits/characteristics to inanimate objects (and, sometimes, animals).

### WHOLE GROUP (20 minutes)

Have a student read aloud Emily Dickinson’s poem “‘Hope’ is the Thing with Feathers” or listen to a reading of the poem on YouTube:

#### **EXTRA — Video of “‘Hope’ is the Thing with Feathers”**

This video has a claymation version of this poem:

<http://www.schooltube.com/video/d21dad2144034d5f8bb8/>

Afterward, ask the students the following questions:

1. How is hope portrayed in this poem? How does this relate to personification? Give examples from the text to support your answer.
2. What is “hope” doing in this poem? What does the narrator mean when she says: “Yet--never--in Extremity,/It asked a crumb of me.”?

Have a student read aloud Langston Hughes’s poem, “Dreams.”

#### **EXTRA — Video of “Dreams”**

This video reads Hughes’s poem and has a visual interpretation to it as well:

[http://www.teachertube.com/viewVideo.php?video\\_id=41522](http://www.teachertube.com/viewVideo.php?video_id=41522)

Afterward, ask the students the following questions:

1. What is being personified in this poem? How do you know that?
2. What is Hughes trying to say about dreams and life? How are they connected?

### PARTNER/SMALL GROUPS (15 minutes)

Have students read “The Lonely Life of a Letter” by Olivia DuCharme, “The Pen” by Joey Dougherty, or “I Am the Penny” by Megan Hulser.

#### **EXTRA — Video of “The Lonely Life of a Letter” and “The Pen”**

Olivia reading her poem: <http://www.7gp.org/olivia-the-lonely-life-of-a-letter>

Joey reading his poem: <http://www.7gp.org/joey-the-pen>

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## Lesson Plan

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Then, ask the students to answer these questions with their group/partner:

1. What is personified in each poem? How is it personified?
2. In the poem, “The Lonely Life of a Letter”, what (or who) do you think the “Q” symbolizes? Why do you think author particularly chose to use the letter “Q” in her poem?
3. In the poem, “The Pen” what (or who) do you think the “pen” symbolizes? Why do you think the author chose to use a “pen” in his poem?

### **INDEPENDENT** (10 minutes)

Ask the students to free write the answer to this question: If you were a letter, what letter would you be and why? Give students the opportunity to share with the class.

### **REFLECTION** (10 minutes)

Have students write a brief reflection over the poetry they read and listened to today. Ask them to include any ideas that popped into their head, lines that really stuck out to them, and/or techniques they may want to try when they write their own poetry.

### **HOMEWORK**

In their writer’s notebook, have students write a paragraph about how today’s lesson added to their idea of what a poem is.



Remind students this is their chance to write a poem for the contest. They can choose any topic and any style. Winning poems are due no later than January 29, 2016.

## **‘Hope’ is the Thing with Feathers** **by Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)**

“Hope” is the thing with feathers—  
That perches in the soul—  
And sings the tune without the words—  
And never stops—at all—

And sweetest—in the Gale—is heard—  
And sore must be the storm—  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm—

I’ve heard it in the chillest land—  
And on the strangest Sea—  
Yet, never, in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb—of Me.

# Dreams

by Langston Hughes (1867–1902)

Hold fast to dreams,  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams,  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.

## The Lonely Life of a Letter

by Olivia DuCharme (7GP Winner, 2013)

I am the letter “Q” on a hardly used typewriter, printed and crisp,  
Gathering dust with each minute,  
Smelling of musty ink and old moth balls,  
Dehydrating because squishy finger pads seldom push on me,  
Staring up at the cold, hard case that entombs me like a coffin.

I am the letter “Q” on a hardly used typewriter,  
Hidden from the other letters in a corner,  
Depending on the letter “U” to make my words shine through, though resentfully,  
Listening as the popular vowels make fun of the outcast I am,  
Sniffing sadly as the “Wheel of Fortune” stars R, S, T, L, N, and E giggle at the  
vowels’ comments.

Ringling silence of numbers that never say anything to me breaks my heart,  
Clicks sounding, clacks surrounding, but my own are hardly ever heard,  
So I sound as a sad ballad with the many rests in between my clicks,  
Bells ringing, chimes dinging, as an end of a sentence draws near,  
With no Q, with no me.

I am the letter “Q” on a hardly used typewriter, branded and forlorn,  
Exhaling noisily one last time to defeat my self-pity,  
Because I am the letter “Q” on a hardly used typewriter,  
And that is who I am meant to be.

# The Pen

by Joey Dougherty (7GP Winner, 2014)

I am a pen,  
Leaping for the blank white page  
Eager to write and draw inspiring tales  
Tracing lines up and down the paper  
Feeling the motions of the desktop below me

Drawing creativity with ink,  
I place black upon white like a chessboard.  
I like to write stories with my swift motions.  
I feel energy rush through me when I create worlds with my mind.

Unlike a pencil, I am not messy.  
The pencil lines smudge at random.  
But I am the swift and sturdy pen.  
I create stories in the blink of an eye.

Ink staining, I race up the page.  
Lines sketching back and forth,  
I create ideas on paper.  
I am the mighty pen.

The pen saved lives.  
The pen crossed seas.  
The pen stops hunger.

How?  
Humans use the pen.  
They sketch laws and rules.  
They write letters and essays.

The pen inspires.  
I inspire.  
I am the pen.

# I Am the Penny

by Megan Hulser (7GP Winner, 2015)

I am the penny  
Not number one, just one  
Alone down in the bottom of the bag  
Not hated nor loved, just worthless

I am the penny  
I've seen too much  
Poor people treasure me like I am their one possession  
rich people seem to not care if they receive their full change

I am the penny  
sitting down here in the dark  
My head looking up at the longing light of the world  
My tail sitting beneath me

I am the penny  
1992 branded on my chest  
Below the statement "In God We Trust"  
Next to liberty

I am the penny  
With an insult written on my back  
"One Cent" in big bold letters  
But there is something you should know

I am the penny  
But when lots of us come together  
We can make a nickel  
We can make a dollar