

Exercise walk-through

5.6

The function of personification

AP English Literature and Composition

From asking to taking

Dawn

“the tide asks softly” represents the intrusion as a seemingly polite visitor.

Noon and dusk

“sends its silver fingers” then “takes” makes the visitor increasingly intrusive.

Personification gives the tide human traits. It does not make the physical tide literally intentional or morally responsible.

Questions for analysing personification

POSSIBLE FUNCTION	WORDING TO CHECK	QUESTION TO ASK
gives a thing INTENTION	it now acts, rather than merely happening	does the context suggest intention or blame?
makes a setting FEEL	the landscape may reflect or contrast with a mood	whose perspective shapes the description?
makes an abstraction ACT	an abstract idea receives a human trait	which human quality is being transferred?
sets the scale	a small thing given a will can dominate a passage	what has been made large, and what small

Identify the specific human trait before explaining its function.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 Define personification in the CED's terms.

[2]

2.2 State the CED's verb for what it does and explain it.

[2]

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 Define personification in the CED's terms. [2]

2.1

- a type of comparison assigning a human trait or quality to a nonhuman object, entity or idea, thus characterising it
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2.2 State the CED's verb for what it does and explain it. [2]

2.2

- characterising; it gives the object a nature, as description gives a person one

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 The analysis lies in the trait chosen.

(a) Explain why.

[2]

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 The analysis lies in the trait chosen.

(a) Explain why.

[2]

(a)

- different traits produce different natures – an angry sea threatens while an indifferent one cannot be appealed to

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 The analysis lies in the trait chosen.

(b) State why personification is a comparison.

[1]

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 The analysis lies in the trait chosen.

(b) State why personification is a comparison.

[1]

(b)

- a human quality is transferred to a nonhuman main subject

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 Personification assigns a human trait to

[1]

☐

A a nonhuman object, entity or idea

B another person

C the reader

D the author

3.2 The CED's verb for the effect on the object is

[1]

☐

A characterising

B destroying

C naming

D counting

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 Personification assigns a human trait to

[1]

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- A a nonhuman object, entity or idea
- B another person
- C the reader
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3.1 A

- a nonhuman object, entity or idea

3.2 The CED's verb for the effect on the object is

[1]

☐

- A characterising
- B destroying
- C naming
- D counting

3.2 A

- characterising

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 A poem describes time as “patient”.

(a) State what has been assigned.

[1]

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 A poem describes time as “patient”.

(a) State what has been assigned.

[1]

(a)

- a human quality of patience

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A poem describes time as “patient”.

(b) Explain what this makes the reader feel about time.

[2]

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A poem describes time as “patient”.

(b) Explain what this makes the reader feel about time.

[2]

(b)

- time becomes something that waits deliberately, so it is not merely passing but expecting an outcome the speaker cannot avoid