

Exercise walk-through

The function of personification ■ 7.11

eXercise

You must be able to

- state the CED's claim about assigning nonhuman qualities to a person
- distinguish this from personification proper
- explain what such a comparison communicates
- analyse the attitude conveyed

Method — The claim

By assigning the qualities of a nonhuman object, entity, or idea to a person or character, the narrator, character, or speaker communicates an attitude about that person or character.

Method — The reverse of 5.6

5.6 gave human qualities to a nonhuman thing. 7.11 runs the other way: a person is given the qualities of a thing. The direction changes what it does.

Method — What it communicates

An **attitude**. Comparing a person to a machine, an animal or a stone says something about how the speaker regards them, and often something they would not say directly.

Method — The analysis

Name the quality assigned, then name the attitude it implies. A man described as “a mechanism” is being denied inwardness, which is a judgment about him and about the speaker.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State the CED's claim about assigning nonhuman qualities to a person.

Solution 2.1

Method: The claim

Worked steps

the narrator, character or speaker communicates an attitude about that person or character **B2**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

Distinguish this from personification.

Solution 2.2

Worked steps

personification gives human qualities to a nonhuman thing **B1**; this runs the other way, giving nonhuman qualities to a person **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

The comparison communicates an attitude.

- (a) State whose attitude.
- (b) Explain the two-step analysis.

Solution 2.3

Worked steps

(a) the narrator's, character's or speaker's **B1**. (b) name the quality assigned **B1**, then name the attitude it implies about the person and about the speaker **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

Assigning nonhuman qualities to a person communicates

A an attitude about that person

B the setting

C the plot

D the date

Solution 3.1

Method: The claim

A an attitude about that person



B the setting

C the plot

D the date

Worked steps

A. an attitude.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

Personification runs

A in the opposite direction

B in the same direction

C in no direction

D only in prose

Solution 3.2

A in the opposite direction



B in the same direction

C in no direction

D only in prose

Worked steps

A. the opposite direction.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

A narrator describes a colleague as “a filing cabinet”.

- (a) State the quality assigned.
- (b) Explain what attitude this conveys.

Solution 3.3

Method: The analysis

Worked steps

(a) storage without judgment or feeling **B1**. (b) the colleague is regarded as useful and impersonal **B1**, which is a dismissal the speaker has not had to state outright **B1**.