

# ISSUE PERSONIFICATION

## DISTANCE LEARNING VERSION

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One way to get students used to writing theatrically about an issue is to turn the issue into a character. Instead of using statistics and facts as dialogue, what's it like to interact with a character personification of the issue.

To personify a concept is to give that concept human traits. How would you turn Depression into a character? What would they look like? How would they move? What would they wear? It's the ultimate example of bringing an issue to life through character.

**Distance Learning:** This activity can be executed by students who don't have access to the internet or computers. A hardcopy packet of student handouts is included as a separate document. If you have a digital platform where you are meeting students online, consider having students in pairs work on the scene and then present their final product in a reading.

### OBJECTIVE

Students will be able to demonstrate how to visualize an issue through character.

### MATERIALS

- Instruction Sheet
- Research Worksheet
- Character Brainstorm Sheet
- Character Profile Sheet

### INSTRUCTIONS

- **Hook exercise:** Students pick an object in their room and write a monologue for that object as though it were a human character. What would the object say if it could speak? For example, a chair might complain about having a sore back from being sat in all the time and it might dream of being a desk.
- Explain to students that they will create a character that personifies an issue, and write (and if possible perform) a monologue/scene that involves that character.
- Students choose an issue. (e.g., anxiety) and if possible do some research on their issue.
- Students make a point form list of factors relating to the issue. Students complete a research worksheet where they cite their sources.
  - **No internet access:** Students write down all the pre-knowledge they have on their issue. They could also interview family members to gather further anecdotal information. Or, they could simply create the character based on their own interpretation of the issue and omit the research step.

- Once they have completed their worksheet, students complete the character brainstorm sheet. How will they personify the issue into a character? What will the issue look like? Sound like? What will their name be? How will they behave? What personality traits will they have that illuminate the issue? The goal is to come up with as much source material as possible.
  - **Example:** Anxiety is like a fire in your head. Possible names include Zunden (German word meaning to ignite), Eldur (Icelandic word for fire), Blaze, Ember, and Spark.
- After brainstorming ideas about the character, students complete a character profile sheet.
- Students have source material from their character brainstorm sheet and their character profile sheet. Now it's time to write the monologue/scene!
  - Monologues are half page. The character in the monologue is the personified issue.
  - Scenes are one page. Scenes should have 2 characters max. One of the characters is the personification of the issue.
  - Whether writing a monologue or scene, focus on bringing the issue to life through character. How would the issue talk, behave and interact.
  - The goal of the monologue/scene is to showcase the issue through character. There should be no facts or statistics.
- If you have a virtual platform where you meet with students online, have them read aloud their monologue/scene.
- If not, have students submit in whatever way you've identified for students who don't have internet access.

# **ISSUE PERSONIFICATION INSTRUCTION SHEET**

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**Task:** To turn an issue into a character

**Outcome:** A half page monologue or a one page scene

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

Do each numbered activity, one at a time. Each number represents one activity. Collect your object monologue, all of your worksheets, and your final monologue or scene to submit.

1. Object Monologue
  - a. Look around your room. Pick out an object.
  - b. Write a first person paragraph for that object as though it were a human character. What would the object say if it could speak?
  - c. For example, a chair might complain about having a sore back from being sat in all the time and it might dream of being a desk.
2. Personification Introduction
  - a. Your task is to create a character that personifies an issue.
  - b. Your goal is to write a monologue or scene that involves that character.
3. Choose an issue
  - a. Choose the issue you are going to personify and write it below:
4. Issue Research
  - a. Using the Research Worksheet make a point form list of factors relating to the issue.
  - b. Cite your sources. If you're using internet research, cite the websites that you use. If you don't have internet access, interview family members and cite them as your source. If you can't interview family members, use your existing pre-knowledge as your source.
5. Character Brainstorm
  - a. Complete the Character Brainstorm sheet to create as much source material as possible for how you're going to turn the issue into the character.
6. Character Profile
  - a. Complete the Character Profile sheet. This sheet will allow you to create as many details for your personified issue as possible.
7. Monologue/Scene Criteria



- a. Monologues are half page. The character in the monologue is the personified issue.
  - b. OR Scenes are one page. Scenes should have 2 characters max. One of the characters is the personification of the issue.
  - a. Whether writing a monologue or scene, focus on bringing the issue to life through character. How would the issue talk, behave and interact.
  - b. The goal of the monologue/scene is to showcase the issue through character. There should be no facts or statistics.
8. Write your monologue or scene!
- a. If you are meeting with your class on a digital platform, prepare your monologue/scene to read aloud.
  - b. If not, gather your object monologue, worksheets and final monologue/scene to submit.

# ISSUE PERSONIFICATION RESEARCH WORKSHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Research your issue and make a point form list of factors related to it. Cite your sources. (eg: internet website link, family interview, or personal pre-knowledge)

Issue Factors	Source



# *ISSUE PERSONIFICATION*

## **CHARACTER BRAINSTORM SHEET**

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Brainstorm character ideas for the issue based on your list of factors. Come up with more ideas than you need. Reject nothing!

What will your character look like? Name five physical traits.

Brainstorm five names for your character.

How will this character behave? Think of five personality traits.

Brainstorm lines of dialogue for this character. How will they sound?



# ISSUE PERSONIFICATION CHARACTER PROFILE

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Character name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Three physical characteristics:

- 
- 
- 

Three personality traits:

- 
- 
- 

Where do they live? How do they live?

Favourite food: \_\_\_\_\_

Least favourite food: \_\_\_\_\_

Favourite article of clothing: \_\_\_\_\_

Favourite movie: \_\_\_\_\_

Least favourite song: \_\_\_\_\_

Biggest pet-peeve: \_\_\_\_\_

