Citizen Science

Personification in Writing

Overview of Lesson

Within the Games+Learning+Society video game "Citizen Science," a muskrat character ("Zib") is portrayed as having human tendencies. Students will experiment with this idea by portraying other elements of nature (other animals, plants, natural landmarks, or features of weather) as demonstrating human characteristics.

Materials Needed

Pencils

Paper

Optional: computers for reviewing Citizen Science content

Content of Lesson

The attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something nonhuman, or the representation of an abstract quality in human form. Within "Citizen Science," Zib, a muskrat, is portrayed as having human tendencies as he talks to, aids, and ultimately plots against the human character that students control. Students will experiment with implementing this technique in the literary sense by portraying other elements of nature (other animals, plants, natural landmarks, or features of weather) as demonstrating human characteristics.

Ask students to brainstorm a list of natural elements in their local community.
Optional: take a nature walk in the blocks surrounding your school. Have students record what they've seen, and compile a class list upon returning to the classroom. Schools located within urban areas can complete this assignment using non-natural objects as well if a nature walk is not feasible.

Students will write a story that includes at least three examples of personification (example: "the wind whispered to us as we walked"). This can either be a piece of creative writing fiction or a description of the class's walk that happens to include personification: whichever the teacher feels better suits the class.

Allow students to share their stories with the class to encourage pride in composition, and consider binding all of the stories into a class book.

Learning Objectives

Students will understand the idea of "personification".

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Students will work responsibly in an independant fashion, staying on task and accomplishing set goals.

Students will be able to demonstrate their ability to use personification via three examples in their work.

Students will be able to reflect upon their shared experiences and access this knowledge in a classroom setting.

Students will be able to responsibly and thoughtfully participate in a nature walk around the school.

Educational Standards

(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3) Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.4.) Produce clear, coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.