

PUBLISHED TEXTS

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“explain the author’s purpose and message within a text”

“compose literary texts such as personal narratives, fiction, and poetry using genre characteristics and craft”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

Published poems are real poems written by real poets and published for the world to read.

A poet paints pictures with words so the reader can see, hear, and feel something new.

When I study what a poet did, I can try that same craft in my own poem.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Personification as Craft

from “My Shadow” (Robert Louis Stevenson, *A Child’s Garden of Verses*, 1885)

A poet can make something that is not alive seem like a person. Stevenson gives the shadow a personality: it grows, shrinks, plays, and even sleeps in bed. This week we read a published poem, notice how the poet uses personification, and try that craft move in our own poem.

This deck teaches **author craft and composition** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE • CHOOSE • SHOW • OWN • DEFEND



PUBLISHED TEXTS

Read the published poem.

Read it aloud slowly. Listen to the rhythm and watch for the craft the poet uses.

My Shadow

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes goes so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close behind me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

SOURCE

Robert Louis Stevenson, A Child's Garden of Verses, 1885 (Project Gutenberg #136, public domain)





TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice how the poet makes a shadow seem like a person.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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Notice the personification.

Read the poem. Find the words that make the shadow seem alive.

**“He is very, very like me” • “he likes to grow” • “He stays so close behind me” •
“fast asleep in bed”**

I CAN | I can notice how the poet uses personification to make something seem alive.



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TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose the line that best shows personification.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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Choose the strongest example.

Which line gives the shadow the most human quality?

A “He stays so close behind me, he’s a coward you can see.”

B “I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me.”

C “He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head.”

I CAN | I can choose the line that best shows personification.



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TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how the poet builds personification across the whole poem.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“explain the author’s purpose and message within a text”

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Show how personification builds.

How does the poet add more human qualities as the poem continues?

Stanza 1: the shadow moves. Stanza 2: it grows and shrinks. Stanza 3: it is a coward. Stanza 4: it sleeps in bed.

I CAN | I can explain how the poet builds personification across the poem.



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TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

"I can write my own personification."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"explain the author's purpose and message within a text"

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Own it. Try the craft move.

Choose something that is not alive. Write two lines that give it a human quality.

**Choose something that is not alive (a cloud, a pencil, a door).
Write two lines that give it a human quality, the way Stevenson did with the shadow.**

I CAN | I can write my own lines using personification.



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TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend why the poet uses personification instead of plain description."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

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Defend the poet's choice.

Why does calling the shadow a coward or letting it sleep in bed work better than just describing how shadows move?

Stevenson could have written: "Shadows change size when the light changes." Why is the poem better with personification?

I CAN

I can defend why personification is a stronger craft choice than plain description.



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Write your own personification poem.

Choose something that is not alive. Give it at least two human qualities. Make the reader see it as a character.

Choose something that is not alive.
Give it at least two human qualities.
Make the reader see it as a character.

I CAN | I can write my own story and use the craft move we studied all week.



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Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The poet calls the shadow "he," says it "likes to grow," calls it "a coward," and says it was "fast asleep in bed." Those words make the shadow seem like a living person.

CHOOSE **A.** Calling the shadow a "coward" gives it a human emotion, not just an action.

SHOW Each stanza adds more: first movement, then growth, then personality (coward), then sleep. The personification builds stanza by stanza.

OWN Answers vary. One example: **"The old door yawned when I pushed it open, tired of standing still all day."**

DEFEND Personification turns a fact into a story. The reader imagines a companion instead of just understanding how shadows work. The craft makes the poem charming and memorable.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. One example: My backpack groans when I fill it with books. It slumps against the wall when I set it down. I think it would rather stay home and rest.



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READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT · FROM “AUTUMN FIRES” (ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, A CHILD’S GARDEN OF VERSES, 1885)

**“In the other gardens
And all up the vale,
From the autumn bonfires
See the smoke trail!**

**Pleasant summer over
And all the summer flowers,**

**The red fire blazes,
The grey smoke towers.**

**Sing a song of seasons!
Something bright in all!
Flowers in the summer,
Fires in the fall!”**

What is the poet’s purpose in this poem?

- A** To warn children not to play near bonfires.
- B** To explain how bonfires work.
- C** To show that every season has its own kind of beauty.
- D** To prove that fall is better than summer.



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The answer is C.

A To warn children not to play near bonfires.

The poem celebrates autumn fires. It does not warn against them.

B To explain how bonfires work.

The poem is not about how fires work. It is about finding beauty in each season.

C To show that every season has its own kind of beauty.

Correct.

The last stanza says “Something bright in all! Flowers in the summer, Fires in the fall!” The poet finds something beautiful in both seasons.

D To prove that fall is better than summer.

The poet does not say one season is better. He says both have something bright.

