

Creating Student Vocabulary Collectors!

A free preview from our Common Core Vocabulary
Lesson Collection

Over the summer of 2013, Dena and I finalized ten vocabulary-based writing lessons and activities designed to promote Common Core vocabulary and depth of thought. This lesson on “Personifying a Vocabulary Word” is just one of ten lessons in our collection of lessons. We also have a free preview of a lesson that explains how we have our students “collect” and write about words every week in our class. You can preview that PowerPoint slideshow by clicking [here](#).

If you're interested in ordering the entire set of 10 Common Core-friendly Vocabulary lessons, click [here](#), or visit our website's [Products Page](#) to see what we also offer reading and writing teachers.

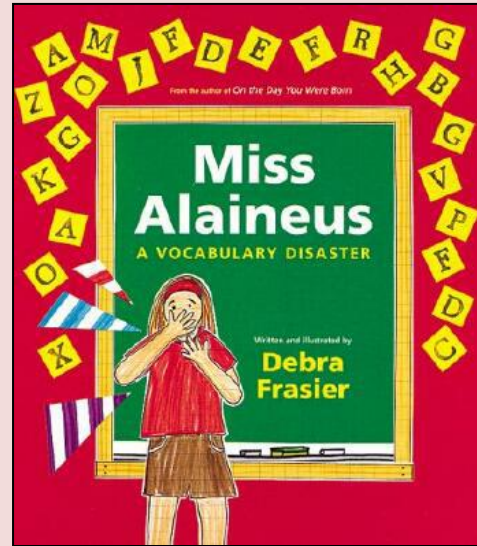
Thanks for your interest in our work!

--Corbett & Dena Harrison (<http://corbettharrison.com>)

Vocabulary Collectors

Welcome!

This slide presentation will teach you how to create a *personified word character* that makes use of one vocabulary word you have collected for the week. It will also provide the criteria for you to receive full credit for your *personified word character*.



Author Debra Frasier wrote a picture book called [Miss Alaineus: a Vocabulary Disaster](#).

It perfectly sets up the idea of personifying new vocabulary words as a meaningful way to remember their definitions.

There is a free-to-access online lesson called **Personified Vocabulary** based on this book. Click [here](#) to see that lesson. Perhaps it will inspire you to host your own “vocabulary faire” at the end of the school year.

Meaningful writing activity = personify vocabulary

Vocabulary Collectors

personification (noun) — the act of giving human qualities to an abstract noun (like *love*) or an inanimate noun (like a *tree* or the *wind*). It's often used by poets.

transitive verb form: *personify*

adjective form: *personifiable*

Synonyms

embodiment (n)

impersonation (n)

personalization (n)

incarnation (n)

Antonyms

dehumanization (n)

objectification (n)

mechanization (n)

disembodiment (n)

The Cat & The Fiddle

Hey diddle, Diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon;
The little dog laughed
To see such sport,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

by Mother Goose

Humans laugh; dogs don't really. That's why this is one example of personification in this nursery rhyme.



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The Sky is Low, The Clouds are Mean

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

--by *Emily Dickinson*



What's
being
personified
in this poem

A *diadem* is a jeweled crown that shows power.

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The Railway Train

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop--docile and omnipotent--
At its own stable door.

--by Emily Dickinson

Personification?
Does this train
have a face?

Do you know
the word
prodigious?

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prodigious (adjective) — describing something that is impressively great in size or extent or degree.

noun form: *prodigiousness*

adverb form: *prodigiously*

A Symbolic Representation:

I used a picture of the planet Jupiter as my symbol for the word. I know it is the most prodigious of the eight planets in our solar system.

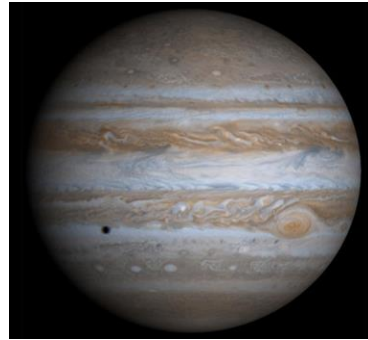


Image found at <http://solarsystem.nasa.gov>

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Why does she
use the word
prodigious in
the 1st stanza?

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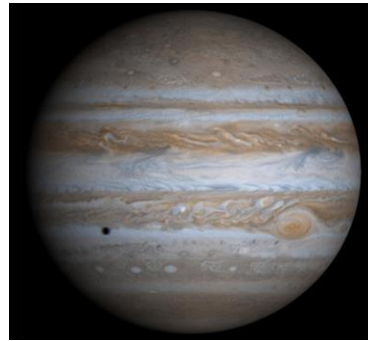


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Try another?
There is a lot
of vocab here.

Can you define
supercilious in
this context?

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supercilious (adjective) — a word to describe someone who thinks they are better than other people.

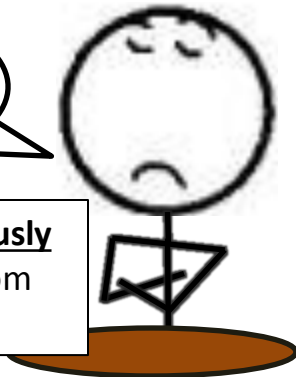
adverb form: *superciliously*

noun form: *superciliousness*

A Mr. Stick Cartoon:

I'd rather save this seat for someone better who might come along.

The new student superciliously spoke to me in the lunchroom today, so I walked away.



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There is a lot of vocab here.

Can you define **supercilious** in this context?

Why would the train be described as **supercilious**?

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supercilious (*adjective*) — a word to describe someone who thinks they are better than other people.

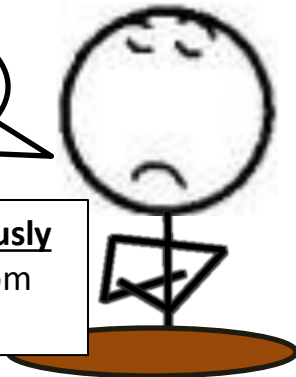
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A Shout-Out to a Great Educator!

Follow this guy's work! Trust me!



Credit goes to my wife for discovering the wonderful [Tingo Ed](#). He posts amazing videos about vocabulary words. Click the image above (or [here](#)) to see his memorable video for the word *supercilious*.

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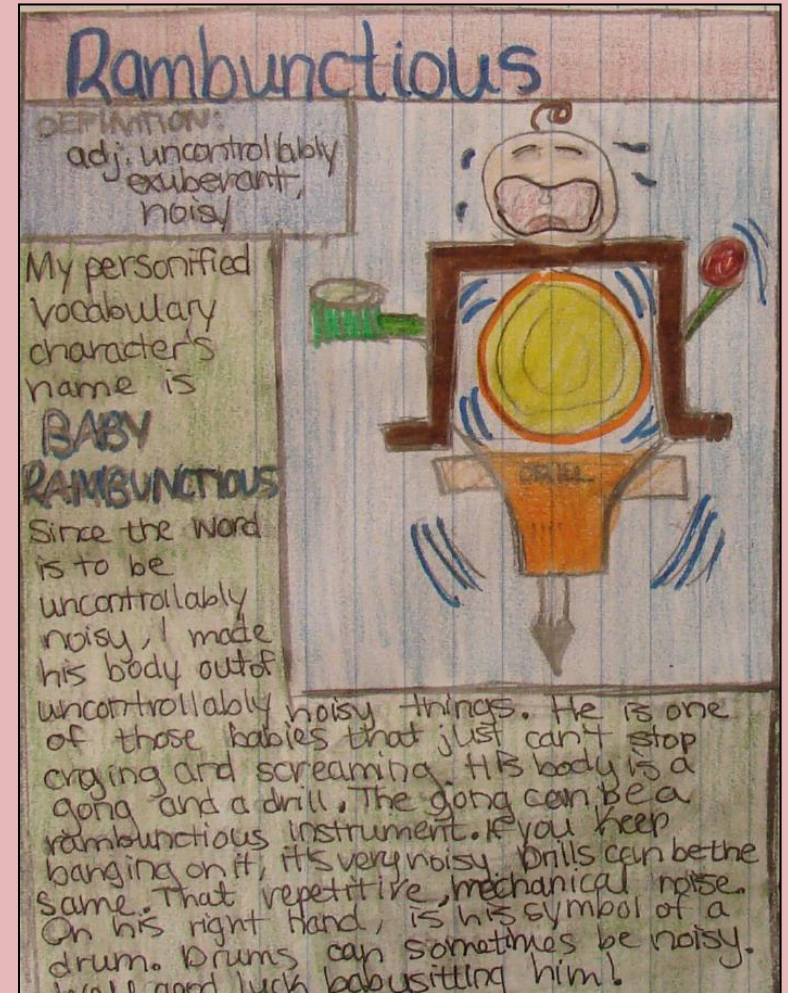
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One of your weekly vocabulary options is to imagine one of your vocabulary words as a person—with a personality, a job, an outfit, a way looking at life. You will **personify the word**.

This will teach you a poetic tool.

This will help you to think more deeply about a word's meaning than you would through rote memorization.

This will make you analyze and write creatively using a new word's meaning.



(Click image to see it in larger form on the Internet)

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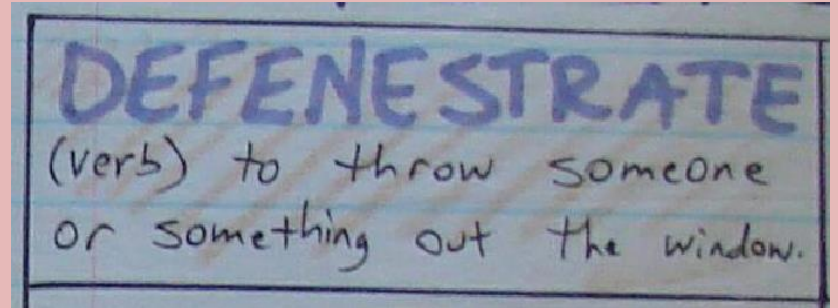
Vocabulary Collectors

“But how do I **personify a vocabulary word**?” you ask.

It’s easy. You simply have to tap into your poetic brain. I’ll show you the process I go through.

One of my favorite words is the transitive verb **defenestrate**.

I first asked myself what kind of person would I associate with that word, and my answer was a Hollywood stuntman because they are thrown from windows.



DEFENESTRATE
(verb) to throw someone or something out the window.



Meet **Mr. Defenestrate**, my visualized stuntman!

Meaningful writing activity = personify vocabulary

Vocabulary Collectors

Next I came up with a rough draft of who he is and why his name and appearance fits him.

Mr. Defenestrate is a stuntman, complete with protective helmet in case he is thrown out the window! His suit -- light blue like glass -- is purposely tattered to look like broken shards.

DEFENESTRATE
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Next I came up with a rough draft of who he is and why his name and appearance fits him.

Mr. Defenestrate is a stuntman, complete with protective helmet in case he is thrown out the window! His suit -- light blue like glass -- is purposely tattered to look like broken shards.

defenestrate (verb) — to throw a person or thing out of a window.

noun form: *defenestration*

Mr. D. Fenestration is a famous Hollywood stuntman. While he's an expert at crashing cars without getting hurt, his favorite movie set request is being thrown out of a window. If there's an old Western being filmed, he always signs up because lots of people are thrown out of windows during the saloon fights. He wears his helmet in public, and his favorite suit has tattered ends, resembling broken glass, in honor of his favorite stunt.



(found in Season of Secrets, page 176.)

Finally I crafted a piece of writing about him on my vocabulary sheet.

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Personified Vocabulary Rubric:

4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
The personification does all of these:	The personification does three of these:	The personification does two of these:	The personification does one of these:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The personified word is visually and neatly represented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The personified word is visually and neatly represented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The personified word is visually and neatly represented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The personified word is visually and neatly represented.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The description is at least 3 sentences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The description is at least 3 sentences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The description is at least 3 sentences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The description is at least 3 sentences.
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Click [here](#) for a printable version of this rubric for your students.

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Check out the following student samples.
Decide if they should earn a 3 or a 4:

Online Student Samples to Analyze:

[Sample #1 - Lauryn](#)

[Sample #2 - Emily](#)

[Sample #3 - Brent](#)

[Sample #4 - Dontae](#)

[Sample #5 - Jackie](#)

[Sample #6 - Rebekkah](#)

Encourage Your Teacher to Join:

Our [Vocabulary Collectors Page](#)
at our [Ning](#) allows any teacher to
post his/her students' vocab samples.

Meaningful writing activity = personify vocabulary

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Mirror

by Sylvia Plath

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
What ever you see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful---
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.
Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

This is an optional extra poem and partner task for teachers using this PowerPoint lesson. Click [here](#) for a printable version of this poem.

Personification again? Where and how does Sylvia Plath *best* personify the mirror in her poem?

What are the two most challenging words. Look those words up. Which word would make the best personified character?

Work with a partner to design a vocabulary entry that would earn a four on the rubric. Be creative!

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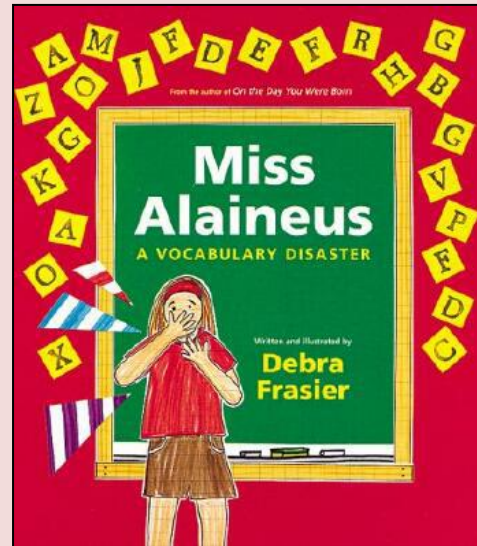
Checking the rubric too many times before starting? I'll bet you're not!

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And don't forget there's a fun lesson online that has students continue personifying vocabulary in their writer's notebooks.

Thanks for watching.
Collect vocabulary to better your future. People will respect you if you have a powerful vocabulary.



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Ten Vocabulary Lessons & Techniques for Writing about new Vocabulary Words:

Personifying Vocabulary	Vocabulary Haikus	Mr. Stick Vocab Cartoons	Vocabulary Symbolism	Showing Vocab Sentences
Root Analysis & Related Words	The Antonym & Synonym Game	E.G.O.T.-ting Sentences	Sausage Sentences	Imp-Int-Exclam Sentences

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