

personify [per-son-uh-fahy]

verb (used with object), per-son-i-fied, per-son-i-fy-ing.

- 1 to attribute human nature or character to (an inanimate object or an abstraction), as speech or writing.
- 2 to represent (a thing or abstraction) in the form of a person, as in art.
- 3 to embody (a quality, idea, etc.) in a real person or a concrete thing.
- 4 to be an embodiment or incarnation of; typify

What's been personified?*

Going up -
press me
for good riddance to pain;
press me
for butterflies
doctors cannot defy;
press me
for inner heaven;
press me
for gossip:
what people will say
in a square of moving space;
press me
to be rid of bedridden;
press me
for answers;
press me
to move in your first straight line;
press me
for self-operation;
press me
like a blessed scalpel on flesh;
press me
to open doors;
press me
to bypass wearing stairs/stares;
press me
for an airborne dance;
press me
for every other floor;
press me
for renaissance;
press me
to the outside and
invigorating air

Writing the Poem

First stage: You will need to decide whether you are writing individually or as a member of a larger group. The ideas you are going to be given in this unit of work are for students/writers working in a group, preferably largish. However, any individual or small group could easily adapt these suggestions to their own situation.

Second stage: You need to decide what object/thing you are going to be. The example you have seen was [* spoiler alert!] a button in a hospital lift. Did you guess right? This is taken from a large group approach to such an exercise where everyone had to be an object/thing that would be found in a hospital (page 3 of this resource provides a list of possible objects/things).

You can use the objects/things/places etc. on this list for your own writing or you can make up your own. It is quite easy to think of a single place where many common objects would be found, for example:

- school
- house
- car repair garage
- football club
- seashore

You could make your choice more confined, for example:

- pencil case
- handbag
- coat pocket
- suitcase
- wall safe

Final stage: When you are writing as the object/thing, remember that you will be writing in the **first person voice** or **narrative**. You will be using the **personal pronoun** *I* or *me* in your writing and this will help you to remain in role.

As you are writing metaphorically, and in this case using **personification**, try to imagine the feelings your object would have. For example, how would a football feel being constantly kicked? What about when it hits the back of the net? How would a handkerchief feel about its use?!

In the example you have seen, is the button in the hospital lift proud of what it helps to do with the hospital patients? Is it sympathetic or neutral? These feelings should be conveyed in the detail provided.

Hospital List

If working as a whole class/ larger group, only the teacher or another individual should have this sheet. The other people in the group then select a number from 1 to 35. When you find out what hospital object/thing you have selected, write a poem as if you are that object/thing, trying to convey your feelings and experiences.

1. a wheelchair in the corridor
2. an oxygen mask in the operating theatre
3. a stretcher in the A & E
4. a pair of nurse's shoes
5. a bulb in an x-ray machine
6. a bottle of pills in the ward medicine cabinet
7. a pair of rubber gloves in the operating theatre
8. a pack of blood in the fridge
9. a blanket in the baby unit
10. a stethoscope around a doctor's neck
11. a crutch in the physiotherapy department
12. a hymnbook in the hospital chapel
13. a settee in the staff room
14. a face visor and mask
15. a television in the waiting room
16. an ultrasound screen in the maternity ward
17. a doctor's emergency bleeper
18. a chair in the fracture clinic waiting room
19. a cleaner's mop
20. a telephone in the A & E ward
21. a get-well card in the hospital shop
22. a vase of flowers in the geriatric ward
23. a thermometer in a ward manager's uniform pocket
24. a door opening into the A & E theatre
25. a bunch of grapes in the recovery ward
26. a teddy bear in the children's ward
27. a mattress in an incubator
28. a magazine in the waiting room
29. a doctor's gown in a laundry basket
30. a button in a hospital lift
31. a painting on a wall in the main hospital entrance
32. a slip-mat in a hospital bath
33. a scalpel in its metal tin
34. an electronic pad on a heart resuscitation machine
35. a hypodermic needle in a paramedic's emergency kit