

## The Crocodile

**Grade Level:** 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grades

**Time Frame:** 30 minutes

**Objective:** Students will learn to identify personification in a poem and practice using personification in their own writing.

**Prior Knowledge and Skills:** Grade level reading and comprehension

**Required Materials:** paper, pencil, and “The Crocodile” by Lewis Carroll

**Literary Model:**

The Crocodile  
by Lewis Carroll

How doth the little crocodile  
    Improve his shining tail,  
And pour the waters of the Nile  
    On every golden scale!

How cheerfully he seems to grin,  
    How neatly spreads his claws,  
And welcomes little fishes in,  
    With gently smiling jaws!

**Sequence of Activities:**

*1. Welcome and Introduction*

This lesson plan was created amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and is designed for an online learning experience, hence the brevity (30 minutes is a good amount of time for a Zoom session before we all lose our minds and turn into Zoombies).

I like to begin lessons with a warm hello and sharing of something relevant to the overall theme of the lesson plan. For example, I might ask students if they have pets and then ask if they’ve ever imagined what their pet would wear if it could put on human clothes, or what it would say if it spoke the same language as you, or what it would do for fun if it could do the same things as humans? This can start a humorous conversation wherein we all imagine our pets taking on the qualities of humans. But really, wouldn’t this be twice as interesting if we imagined humans taking on qualities of the dog or cat world? Humans barking when the mailman walks by. Humans being walked on a leash by their dog. Humans waiting anxiously for their kibble to be poured. Just kidding! Future lesson plan?

Before ending the conversation about our pets, explain to students that personification is a tool that writers use to make their writing interesting. Personification is when animals or objects are given human-like qualities. That is, animals can now do the things humans can do! Some students will find this absurd and funny, and it's a great opportunity for some humorous writing.

## 2. *Literary Model*

Read "The Crocodile" twice. The first round, students are invited to listen and become familiar with the gist of the poem. In the second reading, ask students to search for a line that uses personification. What is the crocodile doing that crocodiles don't really do? Something that humans do. Some will likely point out that the crocodile is cheerful and smiling, welcoming fish into his jaws.

## 3. *Expanding upon "The Crocodile"*

Use the below questions to create a crocodile poem! Students may introduce ideas of their own at any time and need not adhere strictly to these questions. This writing exercise can be carried out as a group collaborative poem, each student sharing a line, or as independently written poems. Students can decide where to break and how to group lines.

What type of clothes does the crocodile wear?  
What kind of human-like activities does the crocodile like to do?  
Who are the crocodile's friends and what do they do together?  
What does the crocodile dream about?  
What makes the crocodile smile?  
What makes the crocodile cry?  
Where does the crocodile go to have fun?  
What is the crocodile's name?

Example from a 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Class:

### **The Crocodile**

*inspired by Lewis Carroll*

Crocodile wears a tuxedo

Crocodile likes to tell riddles and jokes

The crocodile goes to school and her favorite subjects are math and reading

Crocodiles like to play all day and sliding

The crocodile looks for prey when bored

The crocodile challenges his friends

The crocodile dreams of people at the beach

The crocodile just sleeps all day

The crocodile goes to the woods, the waterpark, and the suburbs to have fun

The crocodiles name might be Bella, or Cropro, or Stealy, or Harry Potter, or Croco, or Eaty, or Mily, or Jazzy, or Lizy.

#### *4. Sharing and/or Drawing*

If students wrote individual poems, save time at the end for sharing. Students can also illustrate their crocodile wearing its favorite outfit.