



# Developing A System of Exercises on Personification in Descriptive Essays About Scenery for 5th Grade Students in Vietnam

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Abstract	Original Research Article
<p>Descriptive writing in the Vietnamese language curriculum for 5th grade is an important type of exercise that helps students observe, perceive, and express the world around them in their own words. To make a composition vivid, rich in imagery, and full of emotion, the use of rhetorical devices in general, and personification in particular, plays a crucial role. In reality, many 5th-grade students do not fully understand the characteristics of personification, leading to its improper use or failure to fully exploit its expressive potential. Therefore, developing a system of appropriate exercises to practice the use of personification will help students improve their descriptive writing skills and enhance their creative thinking.</p> <p>With that significance in mind, the article "Developing a System of Exercises on Personification in Descriptive Landscape Writing for 5th-Grade Students in Vietnam" aims to build a diverse and scientifically structured set of exercises. These exercises will help students identify and understand personification in landscape descriptions, apply it flexibly and creatively in their writing, improve their expressive skills, and make their compositions more vivid.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Exercises, Personification, Descriptive Writing, Landscape Description, 5th Grade, Vietnamese Language Subject</p>	

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Vietnam's primary education curriculum, the Vietnamese language subject not only helps students develop reading and writing skills but also plays a crucial role in shaping linguistic thinking, expression ability, and literary appreciation. Among various writing genres, descriptive essays are particularly important as they enable students to observe, perceive, and express the surrounding world through language. To enhance this skill, rhetorical devices—especially personification—are essential in making compositions more vivid, expressive, and emotionally rich.

By 5th grade, students have acquired a basic understanding of language usage. However, they still face difficulties in applying personification naturally and effectively in descriptive essays about scenery. Many students struggle to recognize the characteristics of personification, leading to improper use or failure to exploit its expressive potential. Therefore, developing a system of well-structured exercises to practice personification will help students improve their descriptive writing skills and foster creative thinking.

With this objective, the paper "Developing a System of Exercises on Personification in Descriptive Essays About Scenery for 5th Grade

Students in Vietnam" aims to create a diverse and systematic set of exercises. These exercises will help students identify and understand personification in descriptive writing, apply it flexibly and creatively, enhance their expression skills, and make their essays more engaging.

## 2. RESEARCH CONTENT

### 2.1. Exercises on Identifying and Analyzing Personification in Texts

#### 2.1.1. Objectives

These exercises are designed to help 5th-grade students:

- Understand the concept and characteristics of personification.
- Accurately identify words and sentences that use personification in descriptive passages.
- Analyze the effect of personification in making descriptions of nature more vivid and relatable.
- Develop initial skills in literary appreciation and self-expression.

#### 2.1.2. Implementation Process

##### Step 1: Introduction and Knowledge Review

- The teacher reviews the concept of personification.
- The teacher provides some familiar examples for initial recognition. For example:
  - o *The flowers waved in the morning sun.*
  - o *The stream whispered as it flowed past the rocks.*
- Students discuss the impact of personification in these sentences.

##### Step 2: Guided Identification Exercises

- The teacher presents a descriptive passage that includes personification. Example:

*"In the morning, the sun awakens behind the village's bamboo groves, gently stretching its warm rays over the fields. The rice plants whisper to one another, swaying slightly with the breeze. The river winds through the land, laughing with the vast sky above."*

- Students read the passage and underline or highlight words/phrases that illustrate personification.

##### Step 3: Guided Analysis of Personification

Students answer guiding questions:

1. Which objects are being personified?
  2. What human characteristics or actions are assigned to them?
  3. How does personification enhance the vividness of the passage?
- The teacher summarizes the role of personification in descriptive writing.

##### Step 4: Practice Application

Students complete additional exercises to reinforce their understanding.

##### Step 5: Summary and Reinforcement

- The teacher and students discuss and correct any mistakes.
- The importance of personification in making descriptive essays more engaging is emphasized.
- Students are encouraged to incorporate personification in future writing assignments.

#### 2.1.3. Example Exercises

**Exercise 1:** Read the poem below and answer the questions:

Dark clouds in flocks  
Gather this afternoon,  
The sun hurries away,  
Ducking into the clouds.

Lightning flashes east and west,  
Then heavy rain pours down.  
Leaves spread their hands,  
Catching the cool water.

The wind sings, the wind hums,  
Its voice deep and high.  
Thunder rumbles,  
Racing through the rainstorm...

(Excerpt from *Rain* - Trần Tâm)

*Mây đen lũ lượt  
Kéo về chiều nay  
Mặt trời lặn đỏ  
Chui vào trong mây.*

*Chớp đông chớp tây  
Rồi mưa nặng hạt  
Cây lá xòe tay  
Hứng làn nước mát.*

*Gió reo gió hát  
Giọng trầm giọng cao  
Chớp dồn tiếng sấm  
Chạy trong mưa rào...*

1. Which objects in the poem are personified?
2. How does the poet use human actions to describe these objects?
3. How does personification influence your perception of the scene?

#### Answers:

1. The personified objects are: dark clouds, the sun, trees, and lightning.
2. The poet assigns human actions such as hurrying (*gather*), rushing (*rushes away*), stretching hands (*stretch out their hands*), and welcoming (*welcoming*).
3. The use of personification makes the storm scene more dynamic and relatable.

**Exercise 2:** Identify the personified objects and the words that personify them in the passage below:

Laughter erupted. The Period (.) said:

"I think it's because he never pays attention to punctuation. Whenever his hand gets tired, he just stops there."

All the punctuation marks shook their heads:

"So careless!"

The letter A suggested:

"From now on, before he places a period, he should read the sentence aloud first. Agreed?"

*(Tiếng cười rộ lên. Dấu Chấm nói:*

*- Theo tôi, tất cả là do cậu này chẳng bao giờ để ý đến dấu câu. Mỗi tay chỗ nào, cậu ta chấm chỗ ấy.*

*Cả mấy dấu câu đều lắc đầu:*

*- Ấu thế nhỉ!*

*Bác chữ A đề nghị:*

*- Từ nay, mỗi khi em Hoàng định chấm câu, anh Dấu Chấm cần yêu cầu Hoàng đọc lại nội dung câu văn một lần nữa đã. Được không nào?)*

#### Answers:

- Personified objects: The Period, punctuation marks, the letter A.
- Personification words: *said*, *shook their heads*, *suggested*.

**Exercise 3:** Identify personification in the following passage and explain its effect:

*Today is the final exam for Mr. Oriole's students. The cicada was the first to present its performance. Wearing a transparent overcoat, with sparkling brown eyes full of confidence, the cicada played the symphony of "Summer." The room filled with bright melodies. The violin sang passionately, the clarinet shone, and the cello hummed warmly... The music painted images of red phoenix flowers, golden sunshine, and the vast blue sky. By the hedge, yellow pumpkin blossoms and buzzing bees whispered. Mr. Oriole, deeply moved, bent down to record the score. (Hôm nay là ngày thi tốt nghiệp của các học trò thầy giáo vàng anh. Ve sâu được thầy mời trình bày tác phẩm trước tiên. Mặc áo măng tô trong suốt, đôi mắt nâu lấp lánh, đầy vẻ tự tin, ve sâu biểu diễn bản nhạc "Mùa hè". Gian phòng tràn ngập âm thanh sáng chói. Tiếng vi-ô-lông réo rắt, tiếng clar-i-nét trong sáng, xen-lô ấm áp, ... Tiếng nhạc gọi màu hoa phượng đỏ rực, nắng sáng trắng, bầu trời xanh mênh mông. Bên hàng giậu, hoa mướp vàng và những cánh ong rù rì. Thầy giáo xúc động, cúi xuống ghi điểm.)*

**Answers:** The personified images in the passage:

-The golden oriole teacher: A personified image that turns the golden oriole into a teacher.

-The cicada was invited by the teacher to present a piece: The cicada is personified with the action of a student presenting a piece.

-The cicada wore a transparent overcoat, with sparkling brown eyes, full of confidence: The cicada is personified by wearing an overcoat and having sparkling eyes and confidence like a human.

-The cicada performed the song "Summer": The cicada is personified with the action of performing music like an artist.

-The teacher was moved and bent down to give a score: The teacher (golden oriole) is personified with the emotion of being moved and the action of giving a score.

*Effect:* Thanks to these personified images, the passage becomes more vivid, emotional, and profound, helping readers not only see but also feel and imagine the scene more vividly.

## 2.2. Exercise on Correcting Errors in the Use of Personification in Writing

### 2.2.1. Purpose

The exercise on correcting errors in the use of personification in writing is designed to help 5th-

grade students:

- Identify and detect mistakes when using personification in descriptive essays about landscapes.

- Understand the causes of these mistakes (errors in form, content, overuse, or inappropriate usage).

- Learn how to adjust and correct errors to use personification more appropriately, naturally, and effectively.

- Improve their expression skills, making descriptive essays more vivid and aesthetically appealing.

## 2.2.2. Implementation Process

### Step 1: Review the basics of personification

- The teacher gives a quick review of the concept and effect of personification in descriptive writing.

- Provides examples of both correct and incorrect uses of personification for students to analyze.

**Correct example:** The rice fields whispered to each other as the autumn breeze passed by.

**Incorrect example:** The sun ran around playfully in the sky and then rolled over to sleep. (*The actions "ran around" and "rolled over to sleep" do not suit the characteristics of the sun.*)

Students discuss to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate uses of personification.

### Step 2: Identifying errors in a given passage

- The teacher provides a passage containing errors in personification.

- Students read the passage and identify the mistakes.

- Group discussions help determine the errors and their causes (e.g., forced or unrealistic personification).

### Step 3: Practicing error correction

- Students rewrite the passage, correcting the inappropriate personifications.

### Step 4: Summary and lessons learned

- Students present their corrected versions, and the teacher provides feedback and general corrections.

- The teacher highlights common mistakes in using personification, such as:

- + Over-personification, making the scene lose its natural quality.

- + Inappropriate personification that does not match the actual characteristics of the object.

- + Overuse of personification, making sentences wordy and unnatural.

- The teacher guides students on how to review their writing to avoid personification errors in descriptive essays.

## 2.2.3. Illustrative Exercises

### Exercise 1

*Identify incorrect comparisons and inaccurate use of personification in the following sentences and correct them (An exercise on fixing illogical personification):*

*"In my schoolyard stands a towering old almond tree. No one knows when it appeared here, but by now, it has grown tall and strong. Its trunk wears a rough, grayish-brown outfit, resembling a coat. Its foliage is round like a giant rice cake, shading a large part of the yard."*

### Suggestion:

The teacher asks students to carefully read the passage and then poses the question: *"Which sentences in the passage use personification inappropriately? How can we revise them to make them more logical?"*

Students should identify errors and replace the incorrect wording with:

*"Its trunk wears a grayish-brown, rough garment like armor. Its foliage is round like a giant umbrella, shading a large part of the yard."*

### Exercise 2

*Read the following passage, identify the illogical sentence, and explain why. What sentence should replace it?*

*(An exercise on correcting personification that does not fit the context)*

*"Bamboo is a familiar plant in Vietnamese rural life. It is used to weave baskets and sieves. It is also used for building houses and making toothpicks. Bamboo is a warrior who protects the villagers."*

### Suggestion:

The teacher guides students to recognize the illogical sentence. The sentence: *"Bamboo is a warrior who protects the villagers."* is inconsistent with the preceding sentences, which



describe bamboo’s practical uses in daily life. The metaphor comparing bamboo to a warrior is out of place in this context. Students should replace it with: *"Bamboo is a helpful companion to the Vietnamese people."*

**Exercise 3**

*Read the following passage, identify the illogical sentence, and explain why. What sentence should replace it? (An exercise on correcting personification that does not fit the scene's atmosphere)*  
*"In the morning, Mr. Sun wakes up, stretches, and jumps straight into the sky. The playful clouds chase each other above, giggling. The lazy wind lies sprawled on the treetops, unwilling to move."*

**Suggestion:**

The teacher helps students identify the inappropriate sentence: *"The lazy wind lies sprawled on the treetops, unwilling to move."* Since the passage describes a lively and cheerful morning, portraying the wind as "lazy" and "unwilling to move" creates an inconsistent, sluggish feeling that does not match the energetic scene. Students should replace it with: *"The gentle wind caresses the treetops, softly rustling the leaves."*

**Exercise 4**

*Read the following passage, identify the inappropriate part, and correct it. (An exercise on correcting personification that does not properly express emotion and attitude)*  
*"My garden in the afternoon is so peaceful. Mr. Sun slowly sets behind the bamboo groves, dyeing the sky red. The evening breeze tenderly touches the leaves, making the flowers sway. My little dog, Cún, runs eagerly to greet me at the gate, wagging his tail joyfully. I hug Cún, stroke his soft fur, and whisper: 'Cún, I love you so much!'"*

**Suggestion:**

The teacher encourages students to carefully analyze the passage, focusing on the use of personification to express emotions. The sentence: *"I hug Cún, stroke his soft fur, and whisper: 'Cún, I love you so much!'"* lacks a strong expression of affection. Students should revise it to:

*"My garden in the afternoon is so peaceful. Mr. Sun slowly sets behind the bamboo groves, dyeing the sky red. The evening breeze tenderly touches the leaves, making the flowers sway. My little dog, Cún, runs eagerly to greet me at the gate, wagging his tail joyfully. I scoop Cún up into my arms, cuddle him, kiss his tiny head, and say: 'My sweet Cún, I love you so much!'"*

**2.3. Exercises on Using Personification in Descriptive Landscape Sentences for 5th-Grade Students**

**2.3.1. Purpose**

- The exercises on using personification in descriptive landscape sentences help 5th-grade students:
- Clearly understand how to apply personification to make landscapes more vivid and relatable.
  - Develop language thinking, observational skills, and imagination in descriptive writing.
  - Practice writing sentences with natural and appropriate personification.
  - Increase their interest and enthusiasm for the Vietnamese language, especially descriptive writing.

**2.3.2. Implementation Process**

**Step 1: Review and introduce the concept of personification**

- The teacher reviews the definition and effect of personification in descriptive writing.
- Provides illustrative examples of personification in landscape descriptions.
- Students discuss and analyze the personification elements in the sentences.

**Step 2: Guide students on constructing personified sentences**

- The teacher asks guiding questions to help students create personified sentences:
  - o What object will be personified? (trees, rivers, the sun, wind, clouds, etc.)
  - o What human-like characteristics will it have? (talking, laughing, being happy, sad, etc.)
  - o How will the sentence describe the scene to evoke emotions in the reader?
- The teacher provides some sentence structures for

reference:

[Object] + [Actions, states similar to humans] + [Natural setting]

Example: *The rice fields happily swayed in the gentle breeze.*

### Step 3: Practice constructing personified sentences

### Step 4: Error correction and sentence refinement

### Step 5: Summary and reinforcement

- The teacher summarizes the effective uses of personification from students' work.
- Recaps common mistakes when using personification:
  - Using personification that does not match the object's characteristics.
  - Overusing personification, making sentences unnatural.
- Guides students on applying personification in future descriptive writing assignments.

### 2.3.3. Illustrative Exercises

#### Exercise 1: Rewrite the following sentences to make them more vivid and expressive by using personification:

- The flamboyant tree at the school gate has bloomed.
- Vehicles speed along the asphalt road.
- The flowers in the schoolyard are colorful.
- The full moon rises in the night sky.
- The thick branches intertwine.
- Hoan Kiem Lake is vast.

#### Answer:

- The flamboyant trees at the school gate compete to bloom, painting a corner of the schoolyard red.
- Streams of vehicles race along the asphalt road.
- The colorful flowers are playfully dancing in the schoolyard.
- The full moon smiles at us from the night sky.
- The thick branches stretch and weave together as they grow.
- Every morning, Hoan Kiem Lake lies still and silent like a giant oval mirror.

#### Exercise 2: Add or replace words to create sentences with personification.

- In the east, the sun rises, glowing red.
- The bamboo bush by the lake leans with the wind.
- The river winds and twists.
- The young birds chirp on the tree branch.
- The white clouds float gently.

#### Answer:

- In the east, the glowing red sun rises with a warm smile.
- The bamboo bush by the lake bows gracefully with the wind.
- The river meanders, whispering to the banks.
- The young birds excitedly chat on the tree branch.
- The white clouds lazily wander across the vast blue sky.

#### Exercise 3: Write 3–5 sentences about animals, plants, or objects using personification.

#### Answer:

- The mother banana tree spreads her arms wide, embracing her little children.
- My mother brought home this playful rooster from my grandmother's house.
- The old almond tree stands tall, its rough bark reaching higher than the school roof.

#### Exercise 4: Write a sentence using personification for each of the following objects:

- A rooster
- A teddy bear
- The stem of a rose
- A river

#### Answer:

- My mischievous rooster loves to tease everyone in the yard.
- My teddy bear sits quietly, listening to my joys and sorrows.
- To protect the rose princess, its sturdy stem guards her with an army of thorns.
- During the flood season, the river rushes angrily, roaring like a furious beast.

**Exercise 5: Write three sentences describing the content of a picture using personification.**



**Answer:**

- The stone house gazes thoughtfully at the children playing.
- The stone steps smile as they welcome hurried footsteps.
- The vegetable bed whispers about big and small matters.

**Exercise 6: Write a short paragraph describing a blooming flower tree using personification.**





**Answer:**

The bougainvillea tree in front of my house is like a fairy showing off her beauty. Its bright red flowers shyly nestle among the lush green leaves, like tiny lips smiling at the sun. A gentle breeze

passes by, making the delicate petals sway as if they are dancing. The whole garden is filled with a sweet, enchanting fragrance that makes everyone stop and admire its beauty.

**Exercise 7: Write a 7–10 sentence paragraph describing the picture below (using personification).**



**Answer:**

The painting unfolds a serene scene in the highlands, where time seems to pass slowly. The crimson sun lazily stretches as it rises behind the lush green mountains, while the gentle morning sunlight dances upon the golden terraced fields, like soft silk ribbons joyfully swaying. A small stilt house, with its thatched roof leaning under the shade of a cool green tree, seems to whisper stories of life.

In front of the house, an ethnic woman carries her child on her back, her hands skillfully working, while a simple bamboo basket and a dark brown wooden bucket stand beside her like loyal companions, sharing the burdens of life. The vibrant green corn plants stretch toward the sunlight, like little arms waving to greet the new day. Everything blends together, creating a peaceful and warm countryside melody, embodying the gentle spirit of Vietnam's highlands.

**Exercise 8: Write a short paragraph (5–7 sentences) describing the sounds of a natural scene you love, using at least one comparison and one instance of personification.**

**Answer:**

Playful raindrops begin to fall on the lush green leaves, composing a lively tune like the rhythmic beats of a drum. Distant thunder growls angrily, then suddenly slashes through the dark night sky. The rain pours down heavily, roaring like a cascading waterfall, washing away the scorching summer heat. The wind rises in waves, rustling the tree branches as if whispering secrets among the plants. The summer storm arrives in a hurry and departs just as quickly, leaving behind fresh, cool air.

**3. CONCLUSION**

Personification plays a crucial role in descriptive writing, helping fifth-grade students



create vivid and engaging compositions while also enhancing their linguistic thinking and creativity. However, in reality, many students still struggle to recognize and apply personification effectively. This highlights the need for a structured and scientific system of exercises to help students practice and naturally incorporate personification into their descriptive essays.

The study "*Developing a System of Exercises on Personification in Descriptive Essays for Fifth-Grade Students in Vietnam*" has identified the importance of personification in teaching and learning descriptive writing. It has also established a diverse range of exercises, from recognition and analysis to practice and error correction. This exercise system not only improves students' ability to use personification but also supports teachers in making lessons more engaging, visual, and effective. Implementing these exercises in practice will contribute to enhancing the quality of Vietnamese language education at the primary level, enabling students to write better essays while also cultivating a keen sense of observation and appreciation for nature. In the future, further research and expansion of exercise systems for other types of descriptive writing (describing people, objects) will help refine rhetorical teaching methods, thereby improving the overall quality of language education in Vietnam's primary schools.

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