

## Pathetic fallacy

The giving of human feelings to non-human objects.

Be careful not to get pathetic fallacy mixed up with personification.

Personification can give any human attribute to a non-human; pathetic fallacy is always about human feelings.

Pathetic fallacy is often used to make the environment, especially the weather or the seasons, reflect how a narrator or character feels.

Like this:

"The raindrops wept around him as he trudged home, head down."

Trudging with his head down suggests how sad this character is.

The weather reinforces how he feels.

Raindrops can't literally weep, but the pathetic fallacy reflects the boy's mood by implying that they too are sad.

Using pathetic fallacy can make inanimate objects or non-human life seem more familiar and relatable.

"A friendly sun shone down brightly on the party guests as they arrived in the garden."

Here, the friendliness of the sun creates a feeling of fun and excitement.

Even though the guests aren't described, the pathetic fallacy suggests they are happy and ready for a good time.

The way a scene is described can often reveal a character's state of mind.

In the poem 'The Bargain', Liz Lochhead describes a day trip to the Barras market with her partner:

"Oh I know it's cold"

It's January in Glasgow - of course the weather's cold! But this line refers to more than just the temperature.

It reflects problems in the speaker's relationship.

The pathetic fallacy suggests that warm, loving emotions have died away, leaving a cold emptiness between them, without it having to be explicitly said.

Why don't you try using pathetic fallacy?

It can really brighten up your writing!