

Symbolism

Layers of Meaning





Our Mission:

K¹² / Aventa Learning Instructional Services Team provides students the opportunity to become academically successful by providing rigorous curricula and instruction in a technology-enabled environment with its School Partners.

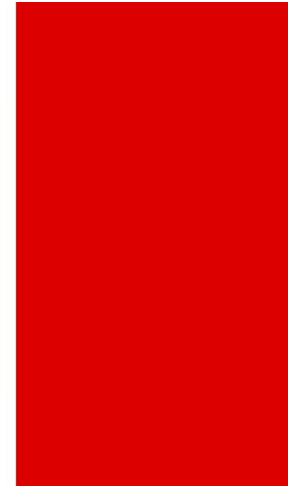


What Symbols Stand For

- A **symbol** is often an ordinary object, event, person, or animal to which we have attached extraordinary meaning and significance.

For example:

- We use a rectangle of dyed cloth to symbolize a country.



- We use a picture of a skull and crossbones to symbolize poison or danger.



- We send red roses as a symbol of love.





What do these symbols mean?





What can be a symbol?

- Object
- Person
- Weather
- Color
- Land/Water
- Animals
- More?



Where Do Symbols Come From?

- Symbols can be inherited or invented.
- The most familiar symbols have been inherited, meaning, they have been handed down over time.

Let's look at a common symbol

- What qualities and characteristics do we associate with lions?
- What message could we communicate by using a lion as a symbol?
- Can you think of examples where lions are used as symbols?

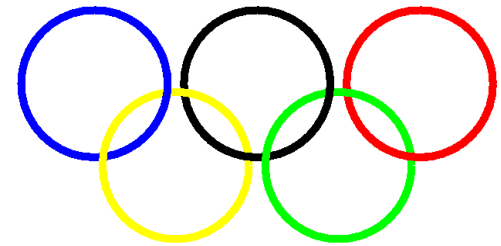


Some symbols are created...

- A crown symbolizes royalty



- Five linked rings symbolize the Olympics





Symbols in literature

- Sometimes authors will create symbols within their stories that have specific meaning in the story, but not necessarily anywhere else.
- Can you think of some examples?

Why Create Symbols?

- You may ask why writers don't just come right out and say what they mean.
- Symbols allow writers to suggest layers and layers of meaning-possibilities that a simple, literal statement could never convey.





An example from a story...

- In the short story “Marigolds,” a poor woman has no beauty in her world except the dazzling marigolds she plants around her ramshackle house. The children in the story, who are as poor as the old woman, hate the flowers and all that they stand for, In a moment of thoughtless hatred and violence, one girl destroys all the bright flowers.

Marigolds

- While the flowers are REAL flowers in the story, we also get the sense that they symbolize something else, something larger than the flowers themselves...



What do you think
the marigolds
stand for?



- Some readers might think they symbolize hope and beauty and that the children are so angry about their poverty that they want to destroy anything that expresses the beauty of another world.
- Other readers will have different ideas about what the marigolds stand for, but most will agree that the marigolds work on more than just a literal level in the story.



Wrapping Up...

- You may not be able to articulate fully what a certain symbol means, but you will always find that the symbol, if it is powerful and well chosen, will speak forcefully to your emotions and to your imagination.
- You may also find that you will remember and think about the symbol long after you have forgotten other parts.