

UNIT 5 Progress & Conflict  
Early Twentieth Century 1910–1929

A STEEM school  
**FROEBEL**  
BILINGUAL SCHOOL  
Home of the Space Generation



# SYMBOLISM



WITH  
**JIM SOTO**

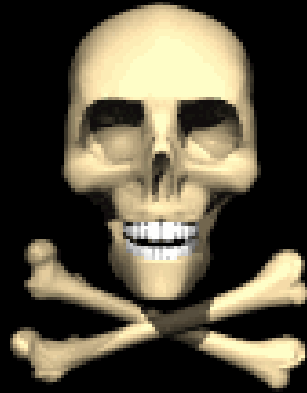




Take a look at this dove.

It's likely that when you look at it the only thought crossing your mind might be, "Oh look, a dove."

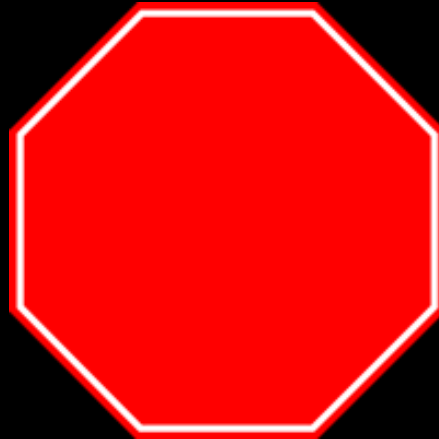
On the other hand, some might be thinking something else. A New Yorker might angrily think in poop and an Egyptian might start thinking in lunch. We look at something, but associate it with an idea.



We are all familiar with images like these. We look at them but think in things that intrinsically have nothing to do with them.

They are symbols.

# WHAT'S A SYMBOL?



A **symbol** is something such as an object, picture, written word, sound, or particular mark that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention.

For example, a red octagon may be a symbol for "STOP". On maps, crossed sabers may indicate a battlefield. Numerals are symbols for numbers. All language consists of symbols. Personal names are symbols representing individuals.

The following are common symbols used in our culture:

- Symbols referring to damnation: Fire, flames, heat
- Symbols referring to salvation: Crosses, angels, haloes, clouds, churches
- Symbols referring to reincarnation or reinvention: Phoenix rising from flames, crosses, rainbows, passing storms, sunrise, broken chains
- Symbols referring to death or endings: Gravestones, Grim Reaper, Day of the Dead, skulls, candle blowing out, coffin, tolling of bell



# WHAT IS SYMBOLISM ?



**Symbolism** is a literary device that invests outward things or actions with an inner meaning in a literary work.



Symbolism occurs when an author uses an object or reference to add deeper meaning to a story. Symbolism in literature can be subtle or obvious, used sparingly or heavy-handedly. An author may repeatedly insert symbols to convey a deeper meaning or may use variations to create an overarching mood or feeling. Symbolism is often used to support a literary theme. Symbolism is supplemental to a story or poem.

# FUNCTION OF SYMBOLISM

Authors like to use symbolism for many reasons. Here are some reasons that illustrate symbolism's importance in literature:

- It acts as a visual aid for readers to better understand complex ideas of concepts.
  - It helps readers follow a book's central theme more easily.
  - It allows writers to write their ideas more creatively and artfully.
  - It allows readers to think about and interpret the author's words independently.
    - It adds emotional weight to a work of literature.
- It helps address a potentially controversial theme discreetly rather than approaching it openly.



# TYPES OF SYMBOLISM

Symbolism takes on many forms, whether in the literary world or in everyday speech. Knowing the differences between various types of symbolism can help you better understand symbolism at its core. Following are a few of the various types of symbolism:

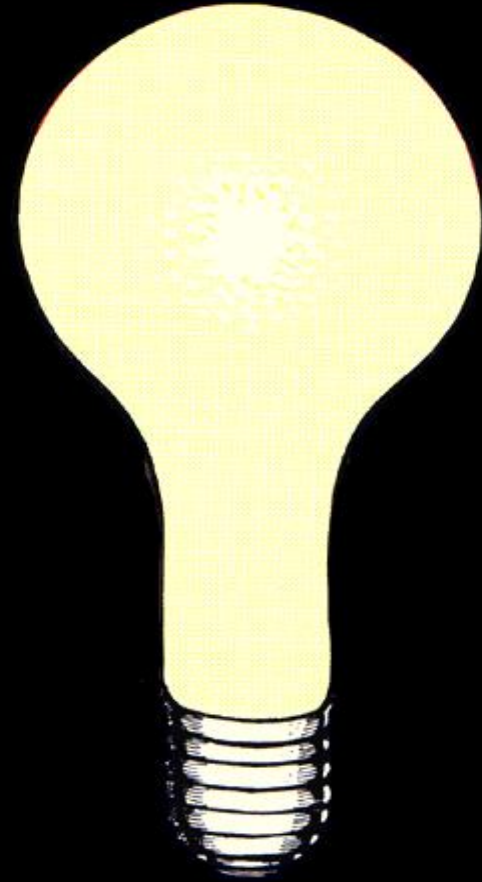


## **Metaphor**

Refers to one thing by directly mentioning another. It compares two dissimilar things while showing that they have something in common. Therefore, while it can provide clarity, it can also show the similarities between the two things or ideas despite their obvious dissimilarities.

## **Simile**

Similes often use the word "like" or "as." The two things you compare with a simile are essentially dissimilar. Unlike metaphors, similes are much more direct comparisons.



## Allegory

An allegory refers to a narrative wherein an event, character, or place delivers a larger message about a real-world concern or occurrence. In other words, it's a story in which most characters and plot developments are symbols for something else or in which the story in its entirety symbolizes a larger phenomenon in the real world or society. Rather than coming right out and saying it, allegories reveal a hidden meaning or message. Modern allegories include the films *Avatar* (2009) and *Mother!* (2017) as well as the novels *Animal Farm* (1945) and *The Lord of the Flies* (1954).

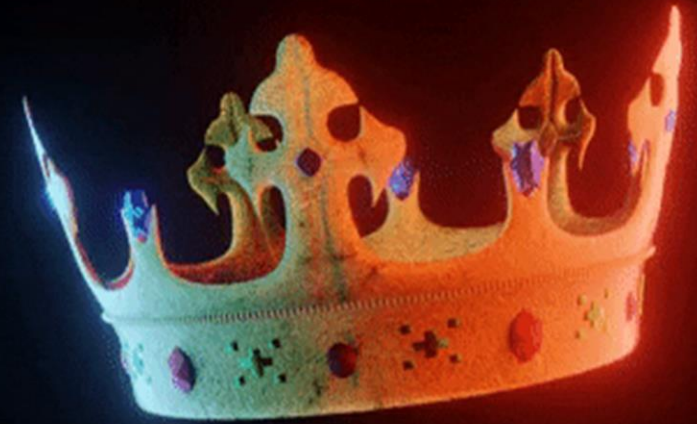


## Archetype

An archetype refers to a story element such as an idea or character type that reoccurs in stories and symbolizes something universal. For example, you can create a character based on certain qualities or traits that make them identifiable to readers. In the literary world, archetypes refer to characters, images or themes that symbolically embody a universal meaning or human experience.

## Metonymy

Refers to one thing by directly mentioning another. It compares two dissimilar things while showing that they have something in common. Therefore, while it can provide clarity, it can also show the similarities between the two things or ideas despite their obvious dissimilarities.



# THE SYMBOL GAME

- Split into teams.
- Get six pages.
- Get drawing material.
- Organize.
- A word will be shown. Working together you'll have 1 minute to come up with a **symbolic image** to represent that word.
- You'll vote for each symbol once, for a rival team if you think it's the better symbol for the word.

quickness

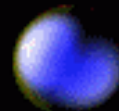
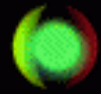
strength

knowledge

hunger

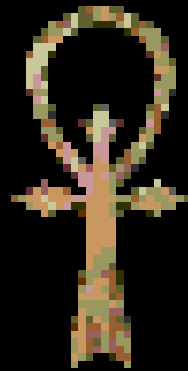
anger

relaxation



# ASSESSMENT

1. What is a symbol?
2. How is a rainbow a symbol of reincarnation or reinvention?
3. What are three functions of symbolism in literature?
4. How is a metonymy like a symbol?
5. How is an allegory like a symbol?



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