

Diction, Figurative Language, Imagery, and Symbolism

Literary Elements Review

Diction

- word choice, or the style of speaking that a writer, speaker, or character uses
- **Powerful words (adjectives, verbs)**
- Hungry vs. **ravenous**
- The army won the battle. vs. The army **obliterated** their enemy.
- The man walked down the street. vs. The man **lumbered** down the street.

Simile

- figure of speech that directly compares two unlike things using “like,” “as,” or “than”
- This **cookie** is harder **than** a **rock**.
- When I run a race, I like the **course** to be **as** flat **as** a **pancake**.
- **She** was shaking **like** a **leaf on a tree**.

Metaphor

- figure of speech that makes a suggested comparison between two unlike things
- Suggests that one thing **is** something else
- My **ex-boyfriend's car** **was** **death on wheels.**
- “Young as she is, the **stuff of her life** **is** a **great cargo**, and some of it heavy.”
- The crowded **cafeteria** **was** a **zoo.**
- Her love for him **burst into bloom.**

Imagery

- language and description that appeals to the five senses; movement (kinesthetic), inner sensations or feelings (organic)
- “A man with a smooth prizefighter’s jowl in which the mouth was only a slit paused opposite him, balancing his truncheon meditatively between the thumb and forefinger...The man protruded the tip of a white tongue, licked the place where his lips should have been, and then passed on.”

Personification

- figurative language in which something that is not human is given human characteristics
- “I was the first person in our town to catch the Spanish Influenza. I heard it come over on the streetcar, hissing and snapping to itself as it crossed the river...”

Personification

“...I could still hear it, when Mother left the room at night,

whispering to itself about itself

as it came across the river on the last car.

It stopped at the foot of our hill for a second,

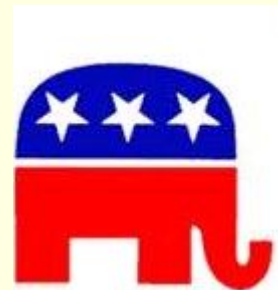
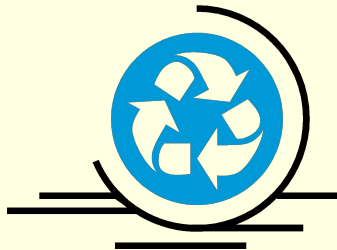
and then rode on down the valley to the carbarn,

where it waited out the night.”

A symbol is...

- A symbol is an image which suggests or represents something other than itself.
- (In other words, when you use something tangible to represent something intangible) .

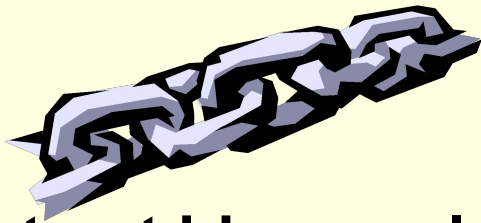
We see symbols every day...



In literature, symbolism...

- creates a direct, meaningful **link** between...

a specific object, scene, character, or action



and



abstract ideas, values, persons or ways of life.

In other words....

When you use something tangible to represent something intangible

“But Teacher, I don’t know what those words mean!”

Tangible vs. Intangible

Tangible



Things that you can touch

Flag

Autumn leaves

Eagle

Peace Sign

Wedding Band

Water

Flowers

Dove

Intangible

Things you cannot touch

Respect

Affection

Wishes

Romance

Disdain

Meaning

Happiness

Angst

Running

Ego

Similes can help

Use the simple simile method

Intangible (something you can't touch)

“Is like a”

Tangible (something you can touch)

“Because”

If you can compare something you can't touch to something you can touch, you've just found a symbol!

For Example

- True love **is like** natural blue topaz **because** it is rare, tough, yet fragile at the same time. True love doesn't happen every day. It is enduring but can dissipate or dissolve if not taken care of.



Let's try a few....

Hate	Gun
Hate is like a gun because both can destroy whatever is in their paths.	
Friendship	High five, gift, rose petal
Friendship is like a high five because both involve showing support to someone close to you.	
Envy	Poisonous apple
Envy is like a poisonous apple because both can eat away at you until you have been destroyed.	
Commitment	Signed contract, ring
Commitment is like a signed contract because both involve the idea of permanence.	

Common Symbols



Let's take a look at a few symbols that are commonly found in literature

Symbolism



A river can represent the flow of life...

... or its depth may represent the unknown...

... the water might represent purity or cleansing...

... or there could be dangers beneath the surface.

Symbolism



A walk into a tunnel – or change from day to night – could show movement from good to evil or that something bad or unknown is coming.



A storm at a critical moment can represent the intense emotion and trouble...

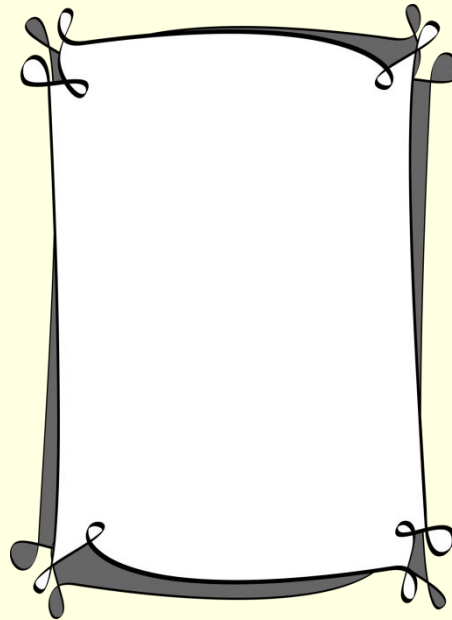


Dawn may show the end of conflict, the “start of a new day.”

HOW MANY SYMBOLIC COLOR MEANINGS CAN YOU IDENTIFY?



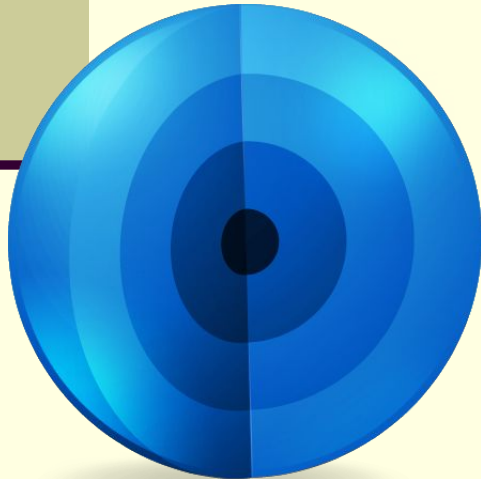
Red



White



Green



Blue



Black