

**Symbolism** is a literary device used to **represent an idea** or **convey<sub>2</sub> meaning**.

• *Authors can use objects, characters, colors, or natural images as symbols.*

Some symbols authors use:	
<b>Objects</b>	<b>Characters</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Flags</b> are symbols used to represent countries.</li> <li>• <b>Bridges</b> are symbols used to represent pathways to something.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scrooge</b> is a symbol of greed (hates Christmas).</li> <li>• <b>Superman</b> is a symbol of good (saving people).</li> </ul>
<b>Colors</b>	<b>Natural Images</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Red</b> is a symbol of love (red valentines).</li> <li>• <b>Gold</b> is a symbol of wealth (gold coins).</li> <li>• <b>Light</b> is a symbol for life.</li> <li>• <b>Dark</b> is a symbol for death.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Plants</b> are symbols of life (they grow).</li> <li>• <b>Water</b> is a symbol of cleanliness (washing hands, bathing).</li> </ul>
<b>Burnt Norton</b> By T.S. Eliot	Symb ol = <b>door</b>
Footfalls echo in the memory Down the <u>passage which we did not take</u> Towards the <b>door</b> we never opened Into the rose-garden.	
The author uses a <b>door</b> as a <i>symbol</i> for opportunity or new experience that never happened. The author uses a door because doors serve as an entrance to new places.	

**Not an example of symbolism:** A The man walked out the **door**.  
 B She left her shoes by the front **door**.

**CFU**

In which sentence is bridge used as a symbol of a connection to different situations? Explain your answer.

**A** Jane knew the interview was a bridge she would have to cross to get the job.

**B** Many people cross the Golden Gate Bridge every day.

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In your own words, what is symbolism? Symbolism is \_\_\_\_\_.

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1. Look at the symbol and read the poem three times.
2. Determine the meaning of the symbol. (circle)
3. Read the poem again and identify reasons that support the meaning of the symbol. (underline)
4. Use symbolism to understand an author's meaning.
5. Explain how the symbol is used to convey meaning.
6. Explain why this symbol is used.

<p><b>Dreams</b> by Langston Hughes</p>	<p>Symbol = dreams</p>	<p><b>In the poem, <u>dreams</u> symbolize:</b></p> <p><b>A</b> what happens when you sleep  <b>B</b> injured birds  <b>C</b> snowy fields  <b>D</b> hope for the future</p>
<p>Hold fast to dreams                  For if dreams die                  Life is a broken-winged bird                  That cannot fly.                  Hold fast to dreams                  For when dreams go                  Life is a barren field<sup>4</sup>                  Frozen with snow.</p>		<p>How is the symbol used by the author to convey meaning? Why did the author use <u>this</u> symbol? Explain.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

<p><b>We're All in the Telephone Book</b> by Langston Hughes</p>	<p>Symbol = a telephone book</p>	<p><b>In the poem, a <u>telephone book</u> symbolizes:</b></p> <p><b>A</b> a book with many telephone numbers  <b>B</b> the unfairness of America  <b>C</b> the equality of American democracy  <b>D</b> the United Nations</p>
<p>We're all in the telephone book,                  Folks from everywhere on earth—                  Anderson to Zabowski,                  It's a record of America's worth.                  We're all in the telephone book.                  There's no priority—                  A millionaire like Rockefeller                  Is likely to be behind me.                  For generations men have dreamed                  Of nations united as one.                  Just look in your telephone book                  To see where the dream's begun.                  When Washington crossed the Delaware                  And the pillars of tyranny<sup>5</sup> shook,                  He started the list of democracy                  That's America's telephone book.</p>		<p>How is the symbol used by the author to convey meaning? Why did the author use <u>this</u> symbol? Explain.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

**The Road Goes Ever On and On**  
From *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.  
Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field<sup>4</sup>  
Frozen with snow.

Symbol = a road

**In the poem, a road symbolizes:**

- A** a path to walk on
- B** a journey
- C** a character's experiences in life
- D** a character's friends and family

How is the symbol used by the author to convey meaning? Why did the author use this symbol? Explain.

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Juan gave a red valentine to Sally and said it was a symbol of freedom. Do you agree? Explain.

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What did you learn today about the use of symbolism to interpret the author's meaning?

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**Solomon Grundy** - by Shel Silverstein

Solomon Grundy,  
Born on Monday,  
Christened on Tuesday,  
Married on Wednesday,  
Took ill on Thursday,  
Worse on Friday, Died on Saturday,  
Buried on Sunday, This is the end  
Of Solomon Grundy.

Symbol = a week

**In the poem, a week symbolizes:**

- A** the life of Solomon Grundy
- B** a week on the calendar
- C** last week
- D** how Solomon Grundy feels

How is the symbol used by the author to convey meaning? Why did the author use this symbol? Explain.

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**Ah Sunflower**  
by William Blake

Ah Sunflower, weary of time,  
Who countest the steps of the sun;  
Seeking after that sweet golden  
clime  
Where the traveler's journey is  
done;

Where the Youth pined away with  
desire,  
And the pale maiden shrouded<sup>2</sup> in  
snow,  
Arise from their graves, and aspire  
Where my Sunflower wishes to go!  
Adapted from original

Symbol =  
sunflower

How is the  
symbol used by  
the author to  
convey  
meaning? Why  
did the author  
use this  
symbol?  
Explain.

**In the poem, a sunflower  
symbolizes:**  
**A** the beauty of a flower  
**B** the journey of a traveler  
**C** a person's desire to go to a  
better place  
**D** the sun moving through the  
sky

**Uphill** by Christina Rossetti

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?  
Yes, to the very end.  
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?  
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?  
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.  
May not the darkness hide it from my face?  
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?  
Those who have gone before.  
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?  
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?  
Of labour you shall find the sum.  
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?  
Yea, beds for all who come.

Symbols = night or darkness

**In the poem, night or darkness  
symbolizes:**  
**A** the end of a long journey  
**B** the end of life's journey or death  
**C** getting lost while on a journey  
**D** travelling while on vacation

How is the symbol used by the author  
to convey meaning? Why did the  
author use this symbol? Explain.

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 Of labour you shall find the sum.  
 Will there be beds for me and all who seek?  
 Yea, beds for all who come.

Symbol = uphill

**In the poem, uphill symbolizes:**

- A** a long trip
- B** a long winding road
- C** wasting an entire day
- D** the journey of life

How is the symbol used by the author to convey meaning? Why did the author use this symbol? Explain.

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**When Sunlight Comes**

Author unknown

The starlight will not guide your steps  
 A map of midnight black  
 The moonlight shows but foolish dreams  
 A ghostly silver track  
 But in the morning sunlight comes  
 Revealing all once more  
 And every hidden path is there  
 And all of life's in store

Symbol = light

**In the poem, light symbolizes:**

- A** light helps you see
- B** darkness makes it hard to see
- C** the type of guidance we follow
- D** light makes it hard to see

How is the symbol used by the author to convey meaning? Why did the author use this symbol? Explain.

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**Fire and Ice**  
by Robert Frost

Some say the world will end in fire,  
Some say in ice.  
From what I've tasted of desire  
I hold with those who favor fire.  
But if it had to perish twice,  
I think I know enough of hate  
To say that for destruction ice  
Is also great  
And would suffice.

Symbols = ice and fire

**In the poem, fire and ice symbolize:**

- A** heat and cold
- B** the destruction of the planet
- C** suffering and happiness
- D** desire and hate

How is the symbol used by the author to convey meaning? Why did the author use this symbol? Explain.

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**"Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night"**  
by Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright -  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Symbols = light and night

**In the poem, light and night symbolize:**

- A** living life and dying
- B** gentleness and warmth
- C** people
- D** day and night

How is the symbol used by the author to convey meaning? Why did the author use this symbol? Explain.

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**The Flag**  
by Edgar A. Guest

We never knew how much the Flag  
 Could mean, until he went away,  
 We used to boast of it and brag,  
 But now the Flag can start out tears  
 In moments of our greatest joy,  
 Old Glory in the sky appears  
 The Symbol of our little boy.

We knew that sometimes people wept  
 To see the Flag go waving by,  
 But never guessed the griefs they kept—  
 We never understood just why.  
 But now our eyes grow quickly dim,  
 Our voices choke with sobs today;  
 The Flag is telling us of him,  
 Our little boy who's gone away.

We never knew the Flag could be  
 So much a part of human life,  
 We thought it beautiful to see  
 Before these bitter days of strife;  
 But now more beautiful it gleams,  
 And deeper in our hearts it dwells;  
 It is the emblem of our dreams,  
 For of our little boy it tells.

Symbol = flag

**In the poem, the flag symbolizes:**

- A** the country
- B** fighting
- C** freedom
- D** oppression

How is the symbol used by the author to convey meaning? Why did the author use this symbol? Explain.

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