

Symbolism:

meanings beyond the obvious

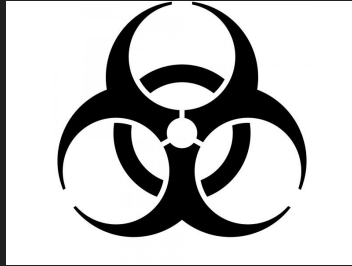
Mr. Jolly
Discovery Honors English

A symbol is...

Any object that stands for itself *and* a greater idea. We see symbols every day...



Which of these images stand for universal, abstract ideas?
What are those ideas?



In literature, symbolism...

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

a specific object, scene, character, or event



and



abstract ideas, values, or ways of life.

Symbolism is used to...

1. Provide meaning beyond the obvious

- Emphasize key ideas or themes
- Connect fictional events to real-world situations
- Relate specific details or characters to universal themes



A river can represent the flow of life...

...or its bends may represent the unknown.

The water might signify purity...

...or dangerous currents.

Symbolism is used to...

2. Draw attention to the plot

A walk into a tunnel could show movement from safety to danger or good to evil.



An approaching storm shows a shift in the plot, heightened intensity, or trouble approaching



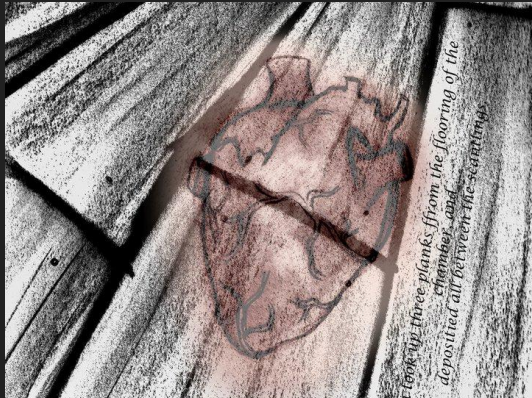
Dawn can show the end of a conflict or the start of a new direction in the story.



Symbolism is used to...

3. Give insights into characters

In Poe's "The Tell Tale Heart," the sound of the beating heart represents the man's guilt.



A character's name can be telling. In "The Lottery", Mr. Graves has authority over the killings.

And appearance can be symbolic; Lennie's great size alludes to his uncontrollable power.



How can you spot a symbol?

There's no one way, so look for:

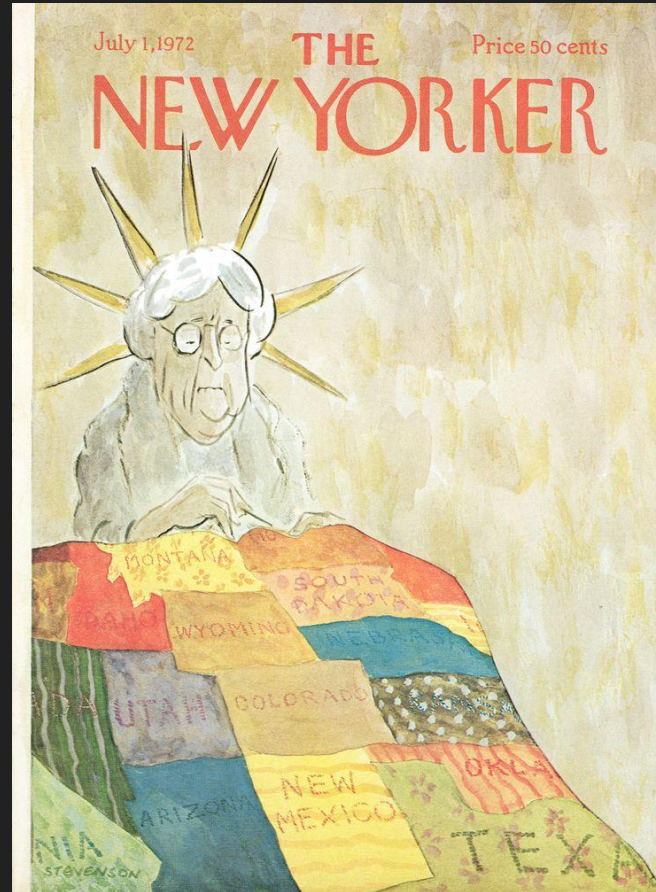
- repetition
- universal colors (red for passion, green for nature, yellow for youth, blue for calm, etc.)
- unusual names
- objects/creatures that have cultural meanings (owls, lions, etc.)

One point of caution

Interpretation can go 'way off the script'; you may lead yourself into seeing symbols that the author never intended.

Make sure that your interpretations can hold up consistently throughout the story.

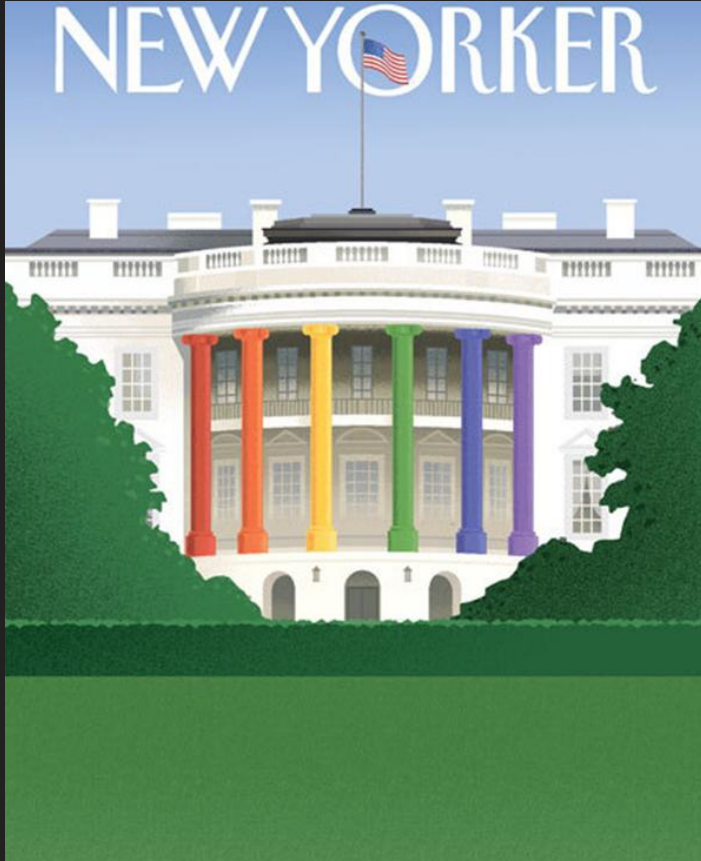
What do these images symbolize?



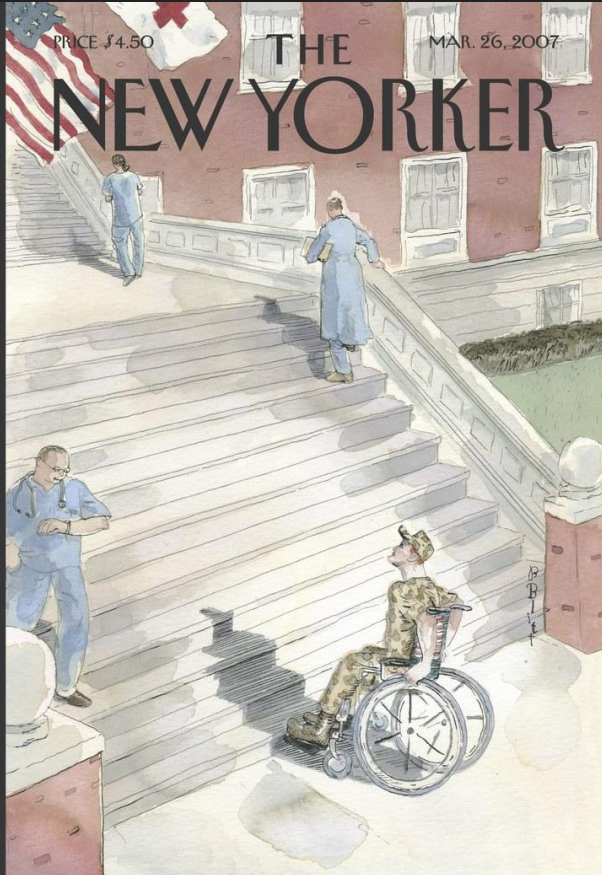
What do these images symbolize?



What do these images symbolize?



What do these images symbolize?



How about this?



How about this?



- old age seeming 'worthless'
- loss of awareness
- incapability
- 'worth' measured as usefulness
- companionship as contrast to isolation/loneliness
- others?

Remember:

1. start with literal meaning
2. explain one clear, obvious connection/representation within the story
3. explain connections to the world at the time of the story
4. explain connections to universal human experiences

For Wednesday:

1. review the three passages/examples you are going to focus on in your paragraphs
2. think clearly about what the symbolism is (other events/characters, bigger aspirations/issues, universal human experiences)
3. find at least two quotes or specific examples (with p.#) to use for each passage/example
4. either type your paragraphs on your school Google account or bring a printed copy to class

Grading:

50% structure (organization, correct grammar/spelling, consistent integration of quotes into sentences of your own)

50% content (clear/convincing examples, supporting evidence/quotes, thoughtful & deep analysis)