

## One Thing Can Stand for Another

A symbol in literature is an object or idea that has a representation beyond the literal meaning of the object. Symbols add meaning to the text and underline some subtle point the author is making. Understanding the meaning of symbols is vital to a full appreciation of the story.

**Decode the list of commonly used symbols and tell what idea each item represents.**

♥ -

☺ -

☀ -

♪ -

♂ -

\$ -

% -

≠ -

Light bulb –

A cross –

A dove –

Four leaf clover -

Authors use symbols to suggest to the reader an idea beyond the literal meaning of the word. For instance, if an author says that “It was a cold and stormy night,” he/she is giving the reader a clue about the mood of the story and what will happen (foreshadow). **Read the list of commonly used symbols in literature and tell what they might mean.**

Color blue –

Color red –

A sunny day –

Storm clouds –

A mirror –

Rabbit –

Snake –

Red rose –

**Think you’ve got the hang of it, try the next few symbols.**

A fence –

Rooster –

Mule –

Appendix #17a

Names can be used as symbolism in literature. Authors sometimes use names to provide an insight into the character. For example, Aunt Nicey in “The Scarlet Ibis” is a very nice person. **Read the list of characters names below and guess what characteristic you think the character will possess.**

Scrooge –  
Boo Radley –  
Joy Turner –  
Young Goodman Brown –

**Try it!** Think of three symbols that weren’t used already. Write a sentence using the symbol, then write a sentence that explains what idea your symbol represents. An example is provided.

**Symbol:** water

**Sentence:** “Ralph waded slowly into the cool, clear lake. After a final look to the sky he dove under and didn’t emerge for what seemed like a lifetime. When he finally broke the surface of the water again, he knew things would be different.

**Meaning:** The water is used to symbolize change and rebirth. After Ralph gets “baptized” in the water, he resurfaces with new found insight, perspective, and energy; he is changed.

**Symbol:**

**Sentence:**

**Meaning:**

**Symbol:**

**Sentence:**

**Meaning:**

**Symbol:**

**Sentence:**

**Meaning:**

Appendix #17b