

What is it?

Symbolism is the practice or art of using an object or a word to represent an abstract idea. An action, person, place, word, or object can all have a symbolic meaning. When an author wants to suggest a certain mood or emotion, he can use symbolism to hint at it rather than just blatantly saying it.

In literature, symbolism can take many forms including:

- A figure of speech where an object, person, or situation has another meaning other than its literal meaning.
- The actions of a character, word, action, or event that have a deeper meaning in the context of the whole story.

For example:

"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;"

William Blake "Ah Sunflower"

"All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts,"

William Shakespeare "As You Like It"

Metaphors and idioms can also be forms of symbolism.

- Life is a roller-coaster
 - This is symbolic because it indicates that there will be ups and downs in life that you have to weather.

Symbolism exists in everyday life.

- Black is used to represent death or evil.
- o White stands for life and purity.
- Red can symbolize blood, passion, danger, or immoral character.
- o Purple is a royal color.
- A chain can symbolize the coming together of two things.
- A ladder can represent the relationship between heaven and earth or ascension.

Lastly, symbolism is fueled on personal and cultural interpretation!

