Symbolism and Allegory

Objective: Students will be able to define, recognize and explain symbolism, allegory and figurative language.

Q: What does it mean to define, recognize, and explain?
APK (Activating Prior Knowledge)

- See if you can explain what the following symbols mean:
Concept Development: Symbols

A symbol is often an event, object, person or animal to which an extraordinary meaning or significance has been attached.

Pair/share: What ideas do these pictures symbolize?
Where do Symbols come from?

- Symbols can be inherited or invented.
- Ex. The Statue of Liberty came to symbolize freedom for people immigrating to the United States by way of Ellis Island.
Importance: Why Create Symbols in literature?

- Symbols allow writers to suggest layers of meanings and possibilities that a simple literal statement could not convey as well.

- Symbols allow writers to convey an idea with layers of meaning without having to explain those layers in the text.

- A symbol is like a pebble cast into a pond: It sends out ever widening ripples.
To understand Allegory, you must first understand the difference between a literal interpretation and a figurative interpretation.

- **Literal interpretation**: looking only at the words and plot...not looking at the symbolic nature of anything.
- **Figurative interpretation**: looking at how the characters, plot, setting etc can be taken in a different context (metaphorically).
WHAT YOU KNOW

WHAT SOME MIGHT KNOW
(and most really need to find out)

WHAT YOU REALLY SHOULD KNOW

WHAT YOU MAY NEVER KNOW

THE UNKNOWN
Allegory

Here’s an example:
  - **Lord of the Flies**
  - Read literally:
    - These boys are stuck on an island
    - Ralph is the leader
    - Jack is always fighting Ralph for power
    - Simon is kind of strange...
Lord of the Flies

- Can also be read as an allegory:
  - Religious Allegory
  - Political Allegory
  - Moral Allegory
  - Social Allegory
An Allegory is a story in which characters, settings and actions stand for something beyond themselves. In some types of Allegories, the characters and setting represent abstract ideas of moral qualities. In other types, characters and situations stand for historical figures and events.
Examples of Allegories

- An Allegory can be read on one level for its literal or straightforward meaning
- An allegory can be read for its symbolic, or allegorical meaning
- Allegories are often intended to teach a moral lesson or make a comment about goodness and depravity.
Fable

- Type of ALLEGORY, usually has animals
- Used to teach moral lessons to children
- Animals/characters represent
  - Virtues=good human qualities
  - Vices=bad human qualities
  - **Fables teach lessons about life**

Represents Perseverance

Represents arrogance
Another example of a famous fable is the following from Aesop’s Fables:

The Hound Dog and the Rabbit

One day, a hound dog was hunting for a rabbit and managed to find one. The hound chased the rabbit for a long time, but eventually, the rabbit escaped. When another dog made fun of the hound dog for allowing the rabbit to escape, the hound dog replied: “You do now see the difference between the rabbit and I; I am only running for my dinner, while he is running for his life.”

The lesson: Incentive will spur effort

Pair/Share: Can you name another fable?
Parable

- Type of ALLEGORY set in the real world
- Teaches a lesson about ethics or morality

The Good Samaritan

- Many stories in the Bible are parables
Concept Development:
Allegory/Parables

- Some famous parables and allegorical stories/movies/television programs are:
  - Animal Farm
  - “The Emperor’s New Clothes”
  - The Wizard of Oz
  - “The Boy Who Cried Wolf”
  - Avatar
  - The Matrix
  - Of Mice and Men
In an old English play called *Everyman*, the main character is named Everyman (he stands for exactly what his name indicates.)

One day Everyman is summoned by death to give an accounting of his life.

Everyman asks his friends Fellowship, Beauty, Strength and Good Deeds to go with him to tell death that he has led a good life.

Only Good Deeds stays with him until the end.

Pair/Share: What do you think the lesson is from this story?
Symbolism vs. Allegory

- A **symbol** can be a word, place, character or object that means something beyond what it is on a literal level.
- An **allegory** involves using many interconnected symbols or allegorical figures in such a way that nearly every element of the narrative has a meaning beyond the literal level, i.e., everything in the narrative is a symbol that relates to other symbols within the story.
Closure:
Symbolism and Allegory Review

• A symbol is ________________________.
• Symbols can be ________, ________, __________, or __________.
• Symbols represent ____________________________.
• Name the four things that can be symbols.
• Symbols allow writers to ____________.
• An allegory is _______ in which ___________________.
  and ________ stand for something beyond themselves.
• Name two types of Allegories.
Independent Practice

• Think of a movie or book that utilizes a symbol (you cannot use an example from this powerpoint!)

1. Name the movie/book
2. Identify the symbol
3. Identify the literal meaning of the symbol
4. Identify the figurative (symbolic) meaning of the symbol
5. Explain why the symbol was used