

Name _____

Date _____

Symbolize

A **symbol** is a person, place, object, or activity that represents something beyond itself. Often, symbols are used to convey significant ideas or concepts, such as freedom, love, hope, or fear. For example, a dove is commonly recognized as a symbol of peace. In literature, characters, objects, conflicts, and settings can serve as symbols to highlight deeper meanings.

Follow the ways to identify and interpret symbols in a story:

- Analyze the details mentioned in the text.
- Look for recurring or emphasized elements (such as objects, actions, or descriptions).
- Think about the significance of these elements to the characters and the overall narrative.

Read each paragraph carefully. Answer the questions in complete sentences. Use your notes and knowledge of symbolism to help you analyze the text and interpret the symbols.

Paragraph 1

Miles felt sick. He couldn't believe he had gotten away with it. Adrenaline rushed through his veins as he thought about what he'd done—he had successfully stolen the money. He went to the sink to try and calm himself. Turning on the water, he poured soap onto his hands and scrubbed them vigorously. Was that someone at the door? He whipped around. No, it was just a stray black cat. Miles returned to washing his hands. How long, he wondered, would it be before someone discovered that he had taken 3.4 million dollars?

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1. What could the water symbolize in this story?

2. How do the clues from the story help you arrive at these answers?

Paragraph 2

Sandra set the tea kettle on the stove and waited for the water to boil. "Honestly, Marco, I think you're overing." "Quiet!" Marco yelled, "Just be quiet! I am so tired of your excuses!" Sandra turned up the heat on the stove and sighed. "I am not making excuses, but seriously, you have no idea what it's like to be home all day and be expected to do your bidding." Marco slammed his hand on the counter. "It's not like it's hard! I am asking for one load of laundry, and you can't even do that." Sandra ignored him and reached for a mug from the cabinet. "That's it!" Marco screeched as the tea kettle whistled and boiled. "I am out of here!"

3. What could the tea kettle symbolize in this story?

4. What could "laundry" and the "stove" symbolize?

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Symbolize – Answer Key

1. What could the water symbolize in this story?

The water could symbolize purification and an attempt to wash away guilt or wrongdoing.

2. How do the clues from the story help you arrive at these answers?

The story emphasizes Miles' physical actions (scrubbing his hands) and his internal struggle, which suggests he is trying to rid himself of guilt.

Paragraph 2

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3. What could the tea kettle symbolize in this story?

The tea kettle could symbolize the boiling tension between Sandra and Marco.

4. What could "laundry" and the "stove" symbolize?

The "laundry" may symbolize mundane household responsibilities, while the "stove" could symbolize the pressure and burdens Sandra feels in her role at home.