

IMAGERY & SYMBOLISM IN LITERATURE

Worksheet

Part I – Understanding Imagery

Directions - Read each question and choose the best answer.

1. What is imagery in literature?

- A. The use of descriptive language that appeals to the senses
- B. The use of characters who represent historical people
- C. The repetition of a word at the beginning of sentences
- D. The use of dialogue to reveal a character's personality

2. Which sentence contains strong visual imagery?

- A. She was nervous about the test.
- B. The old house stood beneath a pale moon, its cracked windows glowing faintly in the darkness.
- C. He thought about his future.
- D. They decided to leave early.

3. Which sense is primarily appealed to in the sentence below?

"The warm cinnamon rolls filled the kitchen with a sweet, spicy aroma."

- A. Sight
- B. Hearing
- C. Smell
- D. Touch

4. Which sentence uses auditory imagery?

- A. The icy wind stung her cheeks.
- B. The golden leaves covered the ground.
- C. Waves crashed against the rocky shore with a thunderous roar.
- D. The lemonade tasted sweet and refreshing.

5. Which sentence uses tactile imagery?

- A. The rough bark scraped against his palm.
- B. The bright stars filled the sky.
- C. The bell rang across the hallway.
- D. The soup smelled delicious.

Part II – Identifying Sensory Details

Directions - Identify the primary sense appealed to by the imagery in each sentence.

6. "The thunder boomed across the valley."

Sense: _____

7. "The bright red sunset painted the clouds with streaks of orange and gold."

Sense: _____

8. "The freshly baked bread tasted warm, buttery, and slightly sweet."

Sense: _____

9. "The cold metal handle felt icy against her fingers."

Sense: _____

10. "The garden smelled of roses, fresh grass, and damp earth."

Sense: _____

Part III – Understanding Symbolism

Directions - Choose the best answer.

11. What is symbolism?

- A. The use of an object, person, place, or action to represent a deeper meaning
- B. The use of only realistic descriptions
- C. The repetition of the same sentence
- D. The use of facts and statistics in a story

12. In literature, a dove often symbolizes

- A. Peace
- B. Anger
- C. Confusion
- D. Greed

13. A character repeatedly sees a broken mirror throughout a story. The mirror most likely symbolizes

- A. Perfect health
- B. A fractured identity or damaged self-image
- C. Wealth and success
- D. A new beginning

14. A storm in a story may symbolize

- A. Conflict or emotional turmoil
- B. A character's intelligence
- C. Physical strength only
- D. Happiness and celebration

15. A road or journey in literature can symbolize

- A. A character's growth or life journey
- B. A character's physical appearance
- C. The weather
- D. A character's age only

Part IV – Imagery or Symbolism?

Directions

Write **I** if the example primarily uses imagery and **S** if it primarily uses symbolism.

- 16. ____ "The crimson sunset spread across the sky like spilled paint."
- 17. ____ A character carries a wilted flower throughout the story to represent lost hope.
- 18. ____ "The icy rain soaked through his jacket and chilled his skin."
- 19. ____ A white flag represents surrender.
- 20. ____ "The smell of fresh pine filled the cabin."

Part V – Analyze the Meaning

Directions

Read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

Passage 1

"The hallway was silent except for the soft ticking of the clock. Maria walked slowly toward the closed door. Her hands trembled as she reached for the cold brass handle."

21. Identify one example of imagery in the passage.

22. What sense does the phrase "cold brass handle" primarily appeal to?

23. What mood does the imagery in this passage create?

Passage 2

"After the argument, James walked to the old oak tree where he had played as a child. Its branches were bare, and the leaves that once covered the ground were gone. He sat beneath it and stared at the empty swing nearby."

24. What might the bare tree symbolize?

25. What might the empty swing symbolize?

26. How does the imagery help communicate James's feelings?

Part VI – Short Response

27. Explain the difference between imagery and symbolism.

28. Why might an author use symbolism instead of directly stating an idea or emotion?
