

Humanities Out There Lesson 1: Interpreting Symbols

1. What does this symbol stand for?



2. What does this symbol stand for?



Hypothesis: _____

Support #1: _____

Support #2: _____

Support #3: _____

Vote after Evaluation: _____

3. What does this symbol stand for?



Hypothesis: _____

Support #1: _____

Support #2: _____

Support #3: _____

Vote after Evaluation: _____

4. What does the rose-bush stand for in the passage below?

The wooden jail was already marked with weather-stains and other indications of age, which gave a yet darker aspect to its beetle-browed and gloomy front. The rust on the ponderous iron-work of its oaken door looked more antique than any thing else in the new world. Like all that pertains to crime, it seemed never to have known a youthful era. Before this ugly edifice, and between it and the wheel-track of the street, was a grass-plot, much overgrown with burdock, pig-weed, apple-peru, and such unsightly vegetation, which evidently found something congenial in the soil that had so early borne the black flower of civilized society, a prison. But, on one side of the portal, and rooted almost at the threshold, was a wild rose-bush, covered, in this month of June, with its delicate gems, which might be imagined to offer their fragrance and fragile beauty to the prisoner as he went in, and to the condemned criminal as he came forth to his doom, in token that the deep heart of Nature could pity and be kind to him. (*The Scarlet Letter*, p. 46)

Hypothesis: _____

Support #1: _____

Support #2: _____

Support #3: _____

Vote after Evaluation: _____

Ideas from Other Groups: _____

5. What does the letter stand for in the passage below?

But the object that most drew my attention, in the mysterious package, was a certain affair of fine red cloth, much worn and faded... on careful examination, [it] assumed the shape of a letter. It was the capital letter A. By an accurate measurement, each limb proved to be precisely three inches and a quarter in length. It had been intended, there could be no doubt, as an ornamental article of dress; but how it was to be worn, or what rank, honor, and dignity, in by-past times, were signified by it, was a riddle which (so evanescent are the fashions of the world in these particulars) I saw little hope of solving. And yet it strangely interested me. My eyes fastened themselves upon the old scarlet letter, and would not be turned aside. Certainly, there was some deep meaning in it, most worthy of interpretation, and which, as it were, streamed forth from the mystic symbol, subtly communicating itself to my sensibilities, but evading the analysis of my mind. (*The Scarlet Letter*, p. 30-31)

Hypothesis: _____

Support #1: _____

Support #2: _____

Support #3: _____

Vote after Evaluation: _____

Ideas from Other Groups: _____

6. What does the baby Pearl stand for in the passage below?

That little creature, whose innocent life had sprung, by the inscrutable decree of Providence, a lovely and immortal flower, out of the rank luxuriance of a guilty passion. How strange it seemed to the sad woman, as she watched the growth, and the beauty that became every day more brilliant, and the intelligence that threw its quivering sunshine over the tiny features of this child! Her Pearl!--For so had Hester called her; not as a name expressive of her aspect, which had nothing of the calm, white, unimpassioned lustre that would be indicated by the comparison. But she named the infant "Pearl," as being of great price,--purchased with all she had,--her mother's only treasure! How strange, indeed! Man had marked this woman's sin by a scarlet letter, which had such potent and disastrous efficacy that no human sympathy could reach her... God, as a direct consequence of the sin which man thus punished, had given her a lovely child, whose place was on that same dishonored bosom, to connect her parent for ever with the race and descent of mortals, and to be finally a blessed soul in heaven! (*The Scarlet Letter*, pp. 85-86)

Hypothesis: _____

Support #1: _____

Support #2: _____

Support #3: _____

Vote after Evaluation: _____

Ideas from Other Groups: _____