

Symbolism

Symbol: something that stands for or represents something else, for instance a skull and crossbones representing poison or pirates, an "X" representing a crosswalk in traffic, a pumpkin for Halloween, or a longhorn steer standing for the University of Texas football team. This lesson provides students an opportunity to explore the world of symbols through developing symbols that will represent them. As we look around us, we see numerous symbols telling us about things, whether it is about a person in relation to something (a sorority, a school, a gang), or an instruction about how to do something (as in traffic signs). What symbols mean and how they work can be very powerful.

Artists have been using symbols in their artwork since the beginning of time. Think about cavemen symbols such as spears and blood which could symbolize hunting. Symbols are widely used in art because artists don't usually paint words or include stories to explain their artwork - the images do that themselves. Some symbolism is obvious but other times it is subtle or even secretly hidden in the artwork.

Personal Symbolism Exercise

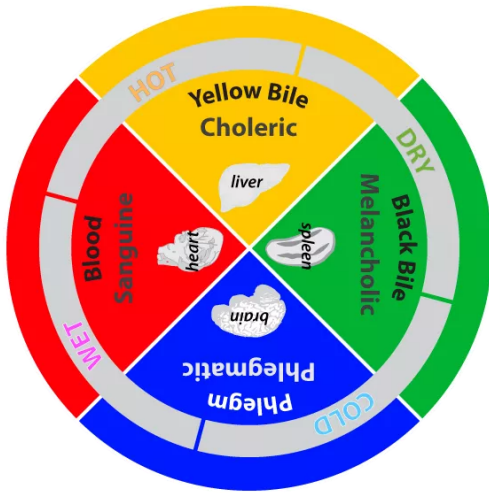
Part One: Creating Personal Symbols. Draw simple thumbnail sketches (as big as your thumb:) for each box. Invent your own symbols and stay away from obvious or regularly used ones. For example if you like gardening you could draw your favorite plants instead of a typical flower shape or shovel. For symbols representing your hometown in column 3 think of your favorite places, things to do or buildings - not just the regular images you would find on a postcard.

Hobbies			
Favorite Foods			
Things that symbolize my home town to me			
Things that symbolize school to me			
My favorite ways to relax			
Cultural Symbols (ex; If you are German and you like gardening look up traditional German flower symbols)			
Symbols for things you don't like			
Things you like about yourself or your important life events			

Warm Up: Symbols Hidden in Masterpieces

Art is full of symbols and we can learn a lot about what the artist was trying to say by recognizing the symbolism they used. Let's look at an old masterpiece, Albrecht Durer's 1514 engraving called 'Melancholy', and see what we can find. Context is always important when looking at art because different times and cultures have their own symbols so let's take a quick trip back in time...

Ei]W_ <]ghcfm



A Ubm UbWYbhVj]]nUjcbg' bchYX' U WēbbYW]cb' VYrk YYb' VcX]m Zi]Xg' UbX']`bYgg" Mci' dfcVUV'm\ Uj Yž hc": cf' Yi Ua d`Yž]Zgca YcbY' \ Ug' gbch fi bb]b[' Zca' h Yf' bcyž UfY' h Ymi g]W' cf' UfY' h Ymik Y`3' Zgca YcbY' \ Ug' U j Yfmi fYX' ZMW' VYVU' gY' h Y'V'ccX' \ Ug' fi gl YX' h YfYž UfY' h YmiUb[fmicf'gUX3'

H Y Zfghi fYW'fX' cZ gca YcbY' WYU]b[' U Wēa dfY Ybg]j Y'gnghYa 'cZVcX]mZi]Xg'k Ug'Vm U ; fYY_ d\ng]W]Ub' Vmi h Y' bUa Y' cZ <]ddcWU]Yg" Mci' a Um \ Uj Y' \ YUfX' XcW'cf'g' fYZf' hc' \ ja']b' h Y' Z'fa' cZ h Y' <]ddcWU]W CUA "

@Uyf' cbž U Fca Ub' bUa YX' ; UYb' kci `X' UXX' hc' <]ddcWU]Ygfi kcf_" K \]Y' <]ddcWU]Yg' ZcW' gYX' cb' \ YU' h' UbX' X]gYUgY' WēbbYW]cbg' hc' h Y' \ i a cfgž ; UYb' kci `X' UXX' hc']h Vmi WēbbYW]b[' U dYfgcbfj' hYa dYfUa Ybh UbX' dYfgcbU]hm hc']a VUUbW]g']b' h Yf' \ i a cfg" 8 i f]b[' h Y' % \$' dYcd`Y[YbYfU`miVY]Yj YX' h Uih YfY' k YfY' Zci f' a U]b' \ i a cf' ' !' bch \ U U \ i a cfž h]b_ cZ]h a cfY' `]_ Y' a YUb]b[' İdYfgcbU]m' H Y' Zci f' \ i a cfg' k YfY' GUb[i]bY' ftd]ja]gh]Wcf' dcg]h]j Yž W c`Yf]W fWUUVnž]`!hYa dYfYXtž a YUbW c`]W fKYdfYggYXž gUXtž UbX' d\`Y[a U]W fWU' a ž hfUbei]ž"

- .
- .

:]bX`UbX`WfWY`H Y`gna Vc`g`
` \]XXYb`]b`5`VfYW h8 i fYfDj`Yb[fUj]b[`Zca``%`%`

:] i fY`cZAY`UbW`c`m “Melancholic” is one of the four humors (personalities). It was the least desirable humor because it was responsible for depression, apathy, and even insanity. The advantage of being melancholic, however, was that this humor tended to be associated with the most creative and intelligent individuals. It was believed that carpenters, mathematicians, artists, and grammarians all tended to be melancholic.

<Ua a Yf: Carpenter

7ca dUgg: Mathematician

Di Hc`k]H`bchVcc_: Grammarian

?Yng: Power

Di fgY: Wealth

6Y`: Eternity

6Uh Darkness. Boiled bats were recommended by the ancients as a remedy for melancholy

K fYUH : Made from a plant which was believed to be a cure for excessive melancholy

7ca Yh Sign of Saturn, the god affiliated with melancholy

AU]Wgei UfY: Orderliness of numbers, each line (horizontal, vertical, diagonal) adds up to 34. Thought to be a talisman to attract Jupiter (The god who could heal the effects of Saturn)

%`%` : The year of the death of Dürer’s mother. Also the date of this print

