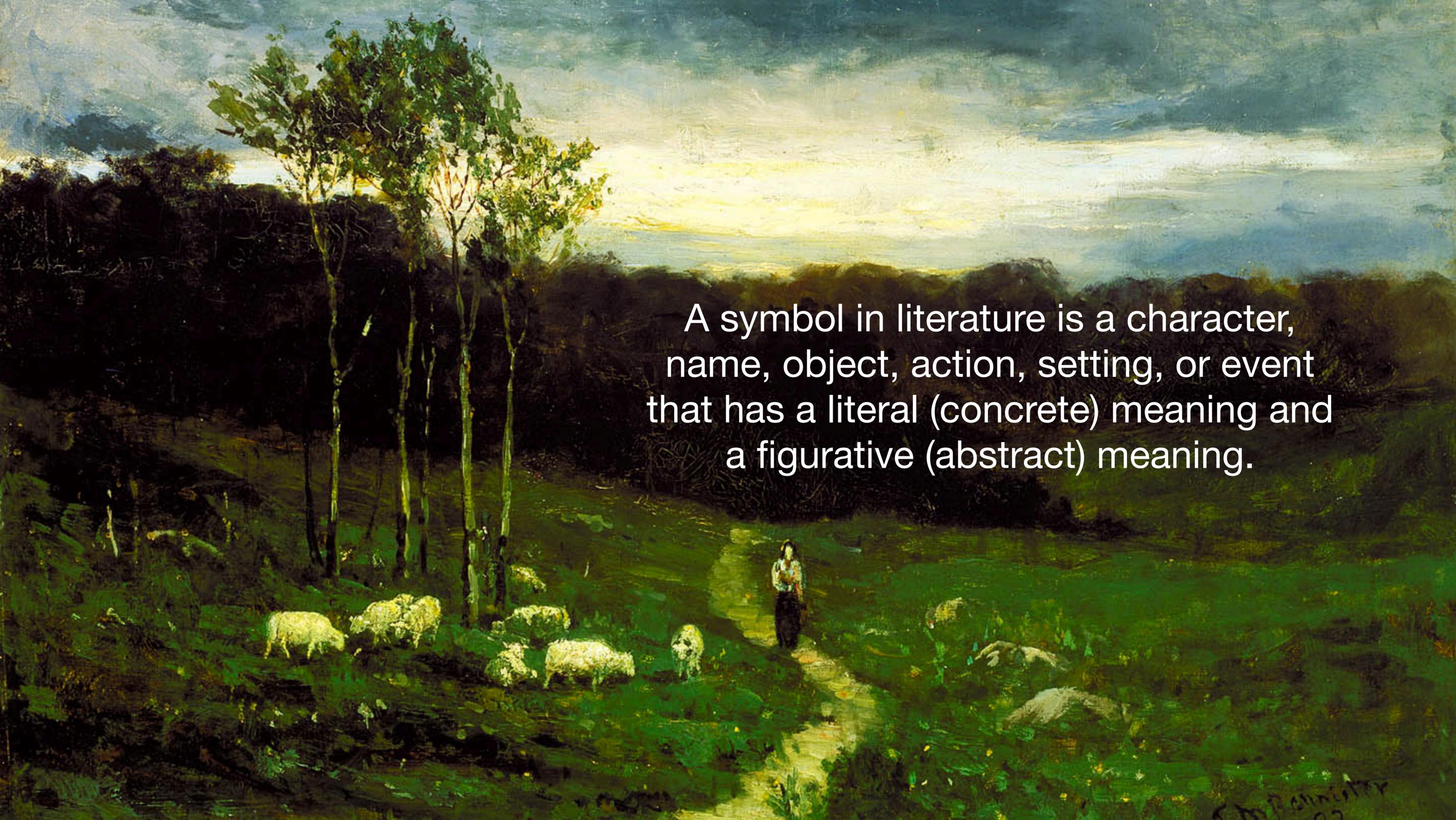


Symbolism in Literature

Mrs. Woody's British Literature Class

A painting of a woman walking a dog on a path through a green field with sheep and trees under a dramatic sky. The scene is set in a lush, green landscape. A woman in a dark dress and a light-colored top is walking a small white dog on a leash along a dirt path that leads from the foreground into the distance. To the left of the path, a group of sheep is grazing. Several tall, thin trees with green foliage stand on the left side of the path. The background shows rolling hills and a sky with dramatic, layered clouds in shades of blue, white, and yellow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall style is impressionistic with visible brushstrokes.

A symbol in literature is a character, name, object, action, setting, or event that has a literal (concrete) meaning and a figurative (abstract) meaning.

A log cabin with a corrugated metal roof is nestled in a snowy forest at night. A warm, yellow light glows from a window on the right side of the cabin. The cabin has a porch on the left side. The ground is covered in snow, and there are snow-covered evergreen trees in the foreground. The background is filled with bare trees.

Symbols are used to keep the story moving along, to develop a character, or to make the story deeper and more meaningful.

Symbols are used to make the story or character deeper and more meaningful.

**What are some common
symbols in literature?**



Colors as Symbols

- Red: blood, passion, emotion, danger, or daring
- Black: passivity, death, evil
- White: innocence, purity, light
- Green: new life, fertility, hope
- Yellow: caution, decay, decrepitude, old age
- Blue: peace, serenity, eternity
- Pink : innocence, femininity
- Purple : royalty, wealth, power
- Brown : earth, soil, humility and poverty
- Orange : heat, sun
- Gold: riches, sacredness

Symbolic Settings: Seasons

Spring: birth, new beginning

Summer: maturity, knowledge

Autumn: decline, nearing death, growing old

Winter: death, sleep, hibernation, or stagnation,
deprivation

Symbolic Settings: Time

A painting of a sunset over a beach. The sun is a bright yellow circle in the center of the sky, surrounded by soft, colorful clouds in shades of orange, red, and pink. The sky transitions to a pale blue at the top. In the foreground, there is a wooden fence on the left and a path leading towards the beach. Tall grasses and various plants are scattered throughout the scene, some in the foreground and some in the background. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Christmas season: birth, change for the better

Easter season: rebirth, enlightenment

Childhood: fresh start, hope, potential

Dawn: illumination, hope

Night: struggle, death, confusion, being lost

Symbolic Settings: Place

Desert: isolation: alienation, loneliness

Garden: paradise, haven

Road, Train, Ship: transition, journey, self-discovery

Cave: hiding, protection, unknown, fears



Symbolic Settings: Place

Crossroads: decision-making, change, fate/future

Park: retreat, renewal

Forest: evil, mystery

City: danger, anonymity, opportunity

Farm: nurturing, wholesomeness, simplicity

Symbolic Actions

Kiss: friendship, intimacy, betrayal

Killing: revenge/justice, independence/freedom, cruelty, ambition

Searching: ambition, maturity or self-reliance, competition

Dining together: community

Elopement: rebellion

Journey/mission: self-discovery, maturity, development



Symbolic Characters



Ghosts: reminders, guilt, insight

Vampires: old and outworn values, victimization of young and innocent characters, seeks to take life from others

Twins: duality of man's nature

Siblings: what could have been, responsibility, priorities

Knight/warrior: protection

Child: innocence, self at an earlier age, potential, a chance to start over

Grandparents: wisdom, nurturing

Symbolic Objects

Chain: captivity or joining two things together

Birds: peace, freedom, hope, death, the afterlife

Full moon: danger, supernatural activity, love

Darkness: ignorance, mystery, death

Fog: mystery, confusion, hiding, concealment

Door: opportunity or point of no return

Window: freedom or lack thereof













