

Signs and Symbols

Sign v. Symbol

Sign

- An object that represents something else
- Often only has one meaning
- Examples: stop sign, yellow light, %



Sign v. Symbol (Continued)

Symbol:

May have more than one meaning

Meaning is attached to its very nature

Evoke emotions and deep responses from us.

What is a Symbol?

Something visible, concrete, or observable through the senses (can be touched, seen, heard, smelled, etc.)

THAT REPRESENTS

Something invisible or abstract (emotion or idea)

Sign v. Symbol

Sign:

We make up signs and designate their meaning.



Symbol:

Have an inherent meaning that we discover and relate to our experiences



Cultural and Universal Symbols

Cultural: particular to a group, place, society, time, etc.

Universal: recognized throughout the world and across cultures.

Examples: MTV, kissing on the cheek.

Examples: Water, tree, fire.

Symbols can have both positive and negative associations.

Example of negative: Fire may symbolize danger.

Example of positive: Fire may symbolize something sacred.



Literal Thinking

- Concerned with facts.
- Observed through the senses.
- Interprets at face value.
- Does not recognize deeper significance in human experiences.

Symbolic Thinking



Objects, relationships, and experiences have many meanings.



Uses ordinary language to express something extraordinary or profound.


