

Adv. English 2

Class Recap

Unmasking Symbolism in "The Masque of the Red Death"

What is Symbolism? A literary technique where an object, person, or color means one thing literally, but is used to represent a much deeper, abstract, or complex idea.

- Poe's Use: Poe uses symbols to communicate the dark themes of mortality and fate without having to directly state them, creating a sense of dread and mystery.

Major Symbols Deconstructed

Symbol: The Clock (Ebony)

Literal Description: The large, black clock in the final room that chimes loudly every hour.

Figurative Meaning (What it Represents): The relentless, unstoppable passage of Time and the Countdown to Death.

Symbol: The Masked Figure

Literal Description: The uninvited guest dressed in bloody, grave-like robes, resembling a victim of the plague.

Figurative Meaning (What it Represents): The Inescapable Reality of Death itself (the Red Death personified).

Symbol: The Seven Colors

Literal Description: The sequence of rooms (Blue → Purple → Green → Orange → White → Violet → Black/Scarlet).

Figurative Meaning (What it Represents): The Stages of Life from birth (Blue, East) to death (Black/Scarlet, West/Finality).

The Core Message (Synthesis) All three symbols work together to emphasize the story's main theme: No one—not even the wealthiest prince—can hide from or stop the inevitability of death.

Homework Assignment: Essay Foundation

Task: Choose one of the three major symbols (Clock, Figure, OR Colors) and write a single, detailed analytical paragraph.

Purpose: This paragraph will serve as the DRAFT for the first body paragraph of your upcoming Literary Analysis Essay.

- Requirements (The Anatomy of an Analytical Paragraph):
- Topic Sentence/Claim: States the specific symbol and its deeper meaning (your main argument for the paragraph).
- Evidence: Two direct quotes or specific details from the text supporting your claim.
- Explanation/Warrant: Connects the evidence back to the symbolic meaning and the story's overall theme.



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