

## Teacher's Guide: Symbolism: Keely's Mountain

Recommended Grade Level: 5-8

(also applicable to grades 9-12 for students requiring significant support in learning)

Suggested Time: About 50-60 minutes spread over one or more class periods, plus additional time to complete a writing assignment

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### Goals

Following are the big ideas that students should take away after completing this lesson:

- Places can have symbolic meaning for people.
- Symbolic places affect people's personal identities—their sense of who they are.
- Writers use symbolism to give meaning to their writing beyond what they have actually described.

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### Vocabulary

(See definitions on page 6.)

- community
- culture
- identity
- sacred
- symbolism

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### Key Literacy Strategies

Following are the primary literacy strategies students will use to complete this activity:

- Making inferences (screens 4 and 5)
- Determining important information (screens 7, 8, and 10)
- Comparing and contrasting ideas (writing assignment 1)
- Making connections (writing assignments 2 and 3)

Note: In addition to the key literacy strategies listed above, students will also use each of these strategies to complete this lesson:

- Monitoring comprehension
- Synthesizing
- Making predictions
- Developing vocabulary
- Developing a topic in writing
- Identifying and using text features (photographs, captions, diagrams, and/or maps)

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### Overview

*Symbolism: Keely's Mountain* is a student-directed learning experience. However, while students are expected to work through the lesson on their own, teachers should be available to keep the lesson on track, organize groupings, facilitate discussions, answer questions, and ensure that all learning goals are met.

The following is a summary of the lesson screens:

- Screen 1: Students think about places that are important to them, and why those places have special meaning.
- Screen 2: Students read about symbols as representations of ideas, places, and people and how places can become symbolic for people who know and love them. They learn that they will meet a young girl named Keely, for whom Wachusett Mountain in Massachusetts has great symbolic meaning.
- Screen 3: Students learn what the goals are for the lesson, which strategies they will be using to complete the lesson, and the important vocabulary words they will use during the lesson.
- Screen 4: Students learn about Keely’s identity as part Nipmuc and part Irish, and read a list of factors that make it difficult for Keely to preserve her Nipmuc identity. They then watch a video that Keely made when she was 12, in which she says that she has mixed feelings about how to be Nipmuc. Students write down one to two sentences to explain what they think Keely means by this.
- Screen 5: Students watch a video that shows Keely going to Wachusett Mountain and explains the central role that the mountain used to play in Nipmuc cultural life. They then write two to three sentences to describe what Wachusett Mountain symbolizes for Keely.
- Screen 6: Students read more about the Nipmucs, about how they lost their land and Wachusett Mountain to European settlers and then moved to other areas. Their identity can no longer be fully tied to the land they live on. They learn that Keely believes that returning the mountain to the Nipmucs would strengthen her tribe.
- Screen 7: Students read a PDF text describing symbolism in fiction. After reading, they write two to three sentences to explain how nature is used to represent ideas such as freedom and danger.
- Screen 8: Students answer three multiple-choice questions to show their comprehension of the meaning of symbolism, why writers use symbolism in literature, and Keely’s feelings about Wachusett.
- Screen 9: Students complete an interactive vocabulary activity to demonstrate their understanding of the meanings of the words, and then choose two words from the vocabulary list and write a new sentence for each word. These tasks demonstrate their understanding of the meaning of the words.
- Screen 10: Students use an interactive activity to highlight text that answers two questions about Keely’s attitude toward Wachusett Mountain and her Nipmuc identity.
- Final Assignment: Students select and complete a writing assignment about the lesson topic.

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## Before the Lesson

- ❑ Go through each screen of the lesson, including all the interactive activities, so that you can experience ahead of time what students will be doing. As you go through each screen, jot down your own expectations for students' responses.
- ❑ Determine if students will be working individually or in pairs on the lesson. Some students may be able to work independently with little or no support. Students who are less familiar with the subject area or who struggle with literacy skills may benefit from working with another student. An effective way to do this is to pair a stronger student with a less able reader. You can also have students work individually on certain tasks and in pairs on others, depending on their experience and needs. If students will be working in pairs on any portion of the lesson, let them know if they will be expected to type in their notes individually or together.
- ❑ Provide instruction on key vocabulary (vocabulary words are defined in the lesson on screen 3, and on page 6 of this guide).
- ❑ Determine what students already know about symbolism and symbolic places and which places feel symbolic in their lives. You may want to use specific questions to start the conversation: Why is the eagle a symbol of the United States? What characteristics of our country does it represent? How does our flag symbolize our country? How has symbolism been used in the books you've read? Record their ideas on a chart. This will give you a sense of the background knowledge and possible misconceptions that students have before beginning this lesson. If time allows, return to the chart after students have completed the lesson to add new learning and correct misconceptions. Note: You may want to record their new learning in a different-colored ink so they can see how much they've learned.
- ❑ Arrange computers with Internet access so students can work individually or in pairs.
- ❑ Before students begin, suggest a timeline for completing the lesson, mention the different types of media they will encounter, and let them know how you expect them to submit their work. You may want to provide an outline of this information on a chart, chalkboard, or whiteboard, or as a handout.

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## Lesson Assessments

The following are descriptions of the lesson features that will be part of the packet of materials that students will submit. Students will use the packet for reference when writing their final assignment. It also serves as a formative assessment tool to monitor students' work as they are progressing through the lesson.

- **Notes** - Students write their ideas in response to a prompt on screens 4, 5, and 7. If time allows, review their notes before students begin their writing assignment.

- **Multiple-choice questions** - Students complete the three questions on screen 8. Walk around to make sure students answer all three questions before they continue. If students click to go to the next page before they finish, their work will not be saved.
- **Match It!** - Students complete an interactive vocabulary activity on screen 9. They begin by dragging the vocabulary terms into the correct sentences. After they finish and save their work, they will be able to check their answers against an answer key. When they are done, they will be asked to choose two vocabulary words and write a new sentence for each word. Sentences should demonstrate a clear understanding of the meaning of each word. An inappropriate response would be “Places can be symbolic.” An appropriate response would be “Places become symbolic when people feel that those places represent them in some way.”
- **Highlight It!** - Students complete the comprehension activity Highlight It! on screen 10. They will read a selection and then highlight specific information that answers two questions about the reading. Students will not be able to check their answers online, so you will need to provide them with correct answers when they are finished with the lesson. You can choose to review the answers as a class or return the corrected packet of materials to students before they begin the final assignment. The following are some of the statements students may select to answer each question:

*Question 1: How has Keely’s attitude about Wachusett Mountain changed?*

Highlighted information to answer question 1 should include that when she was 12, Keely thought she needed to be on the mountain—practicing traditional religious ceremonies and wearing traditional clothing—to be living as a Nipmuc. Now that she is older, Keely sees that the mountain can always be sacred to her and her Nipmuc relatives, even if it is a ski resort.

*Question 2: For Keely, what things are now important to her Nipmuc identity?*

Highlighted information to answer question 2 should include that Keely sees that being with other Nipmucs is more important than re-creating rituals. She is learning more of the Nipmuc language and becoming closer to her Nipmuc relatives in order to keep the culture alive.

- **Final Assignment** - Students complete one final writing assignment. You can choose to let students make their own selection or assign one according to your goals for the lesson. Use the rubric on page 7 to assess the writing assignments.

## Lesson Aids and Extensions

Use the following suggestions to help students if they are stuck on a particular screen, to prepare students for completing their writing assignments, or as follow-up discussions to reinforce learning.

- **Watching Videos** - Encourage students to watch the videos more than once. After the initial viewing, provide students with a specific content focus to frame their next viewing(s) of the video. This will help them draw connections between the main topic and the information that the videos have to offer.
- **Participating in Discussions** - Organize class discussions or encourage students to talk

about their questions in pairs. You may want to use the following discussion starters:

- o What are some symbols of where you live (town, city, state, country)? What do they represent?
- o How is symbolism used in literature? Why do authors use symbolism?
- o Why was Wachusett Mountain a symbol to Keely of her Nipmuc heritage?
- **Reading the PDF text** - Before they read the PDF text on screen 7, ask students to discuss a book or story they have read in which the author used symbols to help describe people, places, or things.
- **Sharing Student Work** - It may be motivational, and a further learning opportunity, for students to post their final essays so that their classmates, peers, and/or parents can see them. This may also provide an opportunity for students to comment on and discuss each other's essays.

If you do not already have access to an online writing community, Teaching Matters™ provides TeXT, free classroom publishing tools that allow teachers and students to create and publish their own online eZine. More information and a free signup are available at Teaching Matters: TeXT (<http://text.teachingmatters.org>).

- **Reflection and Self-Assessment** - After students have turned in their writing assignments, you can choose to have them assess their learning. Bring students together as a whole class or in small groups to discuss the questions below. You may want to return to the chart of their ideas developed before the lesson and record their new learning. You may also have students respond individually to the questions and then convene the class to discuss the chart.
  - o What did you learn?
  - o What was surprising?
  - o What questions do you still have?
  - o What was the easiest for you to understand and do?
  - o What was the most difficult?

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## Vocabulary Definitions

### **community**

A small group of people who live near each other and are similar in some way.

### **culture**

The behaviors and beliefs of a group of people. Culture includes clothing styles, food, social customs, ways of speaking, and religious practice.

### **identity**

People's understanding of who they are, based on language, race, religion, culture, beliefs, and other factors.

### **sacred**

Something that members of a religious group consider holy, or important to their religion.

### **symbolism**

When objects or images represent ideas, places, or people.

## Final Assignment Rubric Symbolism: Keely's Mountain

1. Compare and contrast Keely's perspective on identity and symbolism at age 12 with her perspective now that she's older.
2. Think of a place that is symbolic to you. Describe what this place symbolizes, and why.
3. Think of a book you have read. What characters, places, or objects in the story were symbols of an idea or belief?

4	3	2	1
<p>Provides a clear and accurate response to the question. Ideas are elaborated, with three or more relevant supporting details from the reading passage, video, and other materials in the lesson.</p>	<p>Provides an adequate response to the question. Topic and ideas are generally well organized, with two relevant supporting details from the reading passage, video, and other materials in the lesson.</p>	<p>Provides a generally accurate response, with one supporting detail from the reading passage, video, and other materials in the lesson.</p>	<p>Provides an inaccurate response to the question or fails to address the question. May include misinterpretations. Understanding of the topic is not apparent.</p>
<p>Uses at least three vocabulary words (or a form of the vocabulary words) from the lesson, and uses them all correctly.</p>	<p>Uses two vocabulary words (or a form of the vocabulary words) from the lesson, and uses them both correctly.</p>	<p>Uses one vocabulary word (or a form of the vocabulary word) from the lesson, and uses it correctly.</p>	<p>Does not use any vocabulary words, or uses vocabulary words incorrectly.</p>

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## Scoring the Rubric

Here are two suggestions for scoring the final assignment rubric. Select the option that best meets your needs or develop your own grading system.

**Option 1:** This option provides one score for each submitted assignment.

Assign a score of 4 or below for the written response (first row of the rubric) and a score of 4 or below for the use of vocabulary (second row of the rubric), for a total maximum score of 8. The interpretation of scores is as follows:

Score	Grade	Narrative Interpretation
7-8	A	Excellent
5-6	B	Good
4	C	Adequate (Fair)
3 or below	D	Minimal

**Option 2:** This option provides two scores for each submitted assignment: one for written content and one for the use of key vocabulary. An advantage of separate scores is that you can weight students' comprehension and composition differently than you do their knowledge of vocabulary. It can also help you identify specific needs for future instruction.

Assign a score of 4 or below for the written response (first row of the rubric) and a score of 4 or below for the use of vocabulary (second row of the rubric) and then score them separately. The interpretation of scores is as follows:

Score	Grade	Narrative Interpretation
4	A	Excellent
3	B	Good
2	C	Adequate (Fair)
1	D	Minimal

The final grade may look like this: A/B (A for content and B for vocabulary use).