



UNIT-1

Exploring Symbols

ACTIVITY - 1

Rabindranath Tagore was born in Calcutta in 1861. He is the poet who wrote India's national anthem, and he won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. Tagore started to write poetry when he was only eight years old and he published his first poem when he was only sixteen. For this Tagore did not use his real name. He used a pen name, 'Bhanu Simha', meant "Sun Lion".



If you publish a story or poem, what "pen name" would you choose? You can make your name as silly or as serious as you wish.

Share your pen name with your classmates. Fill in the chart with interesting pen names you hear in your class.

Some Pen Names from My Classmates			
Classmate's Name	Pen Name	Classmate's Name	Pen Name

Of all the new pen names you heard in your classroom, which pen name did you think was most interesting?

ACTIVITY - 2

Read the poem carefully to yourself. Mark any word that you don't understand. Use a dictionary, the internet, or your classmates who may help you to understand each word and idea in the poem.



New Words?

Where the Mind Is Without Fear

Where the mind is without fear and
the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been
broken up into fragments by
narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the
depth of the truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its
arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason
has not lost its way into the dreary
desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by
thee into ever-widening thought
and action-

Into that heaven of freedom, my
Father, let my country awake.

- RABINDRANATH TAGORE



Match the words in column A and with their meanings given in column B.

A	B
Fragments	to labour hard
Striving	cheerless
Dreary	pieces broken off or detached from a complete portion
Domestic	without rest or sleep
Tireless	a waterless or isolated area or land
Desert	related to family affairs

ACTIVITY - 3

Look carefully at “Where the Mind Is Without Fear”. The poet is talking to someone. What words help you to understand whom the poet is talking to?

The subjects of the first three lines of the poem are underlined below

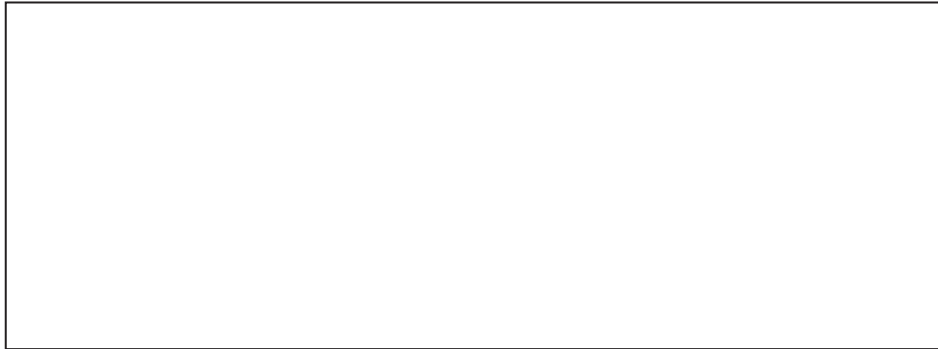
Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken

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What's the subject of the fourth line?

The poem says, “Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit”

What is “lost” in this line of the poem?



ACTIVITY - 4

Adjectives are words that describe nouns. Nouns are words that name people, places, things, and ideas.

Look carefully at the poem and underline ALL the adjectives you find.

How many adjectives did you find? Write the number here.

Compare your number to numbers your classmates wrote. Which classmate wrote the largest number? Write that classmate's name and the number of adjectives here.

My classmate, named _____, found the most adjectives. S/he found _____ adjectives.

Look carefully at the adjectives your classmate found. Which adjectives did your classmate find that you missed? Write them here.

If you found the most adjectives in your class,
C O N G R A T U L A T I O N S !

Help your classmates to understand all the adjectives in the poem!





ACTIVITY - 5

This unit is called “Exploring Symbols.” A symbol is a word, image, or object that represents something else, just as “Sun Lion” represented (stood for) Tagore and your pen name represents you. Symbols are very common in poetry and stories. Tagore used them often. In the line

“Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit”

Tagore tells us that “reason” is a “stream”. Tagore thinks of reason as if it is a stream. The stream is a symbol for reason. What is another line where we see that Tagore uses a symbol in this way?

Tagore wrote India's national anthem and is very much loved. There are many other symbols of India that are also loved by her people. Consider the national bird, tree, game, fruit, etc. Think about the national emblem or flag. Think about colours or animals that are beloved in India.

Work together as a group to make a list of at least 10 “symbols of India.”

Compare the list that your group made with other lists. Did other classmates think of symbols that you did not?

ACTIVITY - 6

As a class, compare all the lists that were made in activity 6 to make a new list that ranks five symbols according to your group's favourite. Ranking means to put in order. Rank the symbol that is your group loves most as first, the next favourite is second.... The least favourite of the five will be last. Use any items from any list.

My group ranks these five symbols according to preference:	
1.	Favourite
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	Least Favourite

Remember that a symbol is something that represents, or “stands for”, something else. For example, the colour green in India's flag does not ONLY mean green. It also “stands for” fertility. Why does green have this meaning? People will have different answers to this question. Maybe green stands for fertility because it is the colour of the plants that come up every spring, the colour of fertile land that grows our food.

People have very different ideas about what symbols mean. What does your group think about their favourite symbol of India means?



ACTIVITY - 7

Use this paragraph to help you write about the activities with symbols.

My class looked at symbols of India. My group ranked these five symbols:

My group decided the _____ is our favourite.

We liked the _____ best because _____.

My own favourite symbol is the _____.

I like the _____ best because _____.

To me, this is the symbol means _____
because _____.

Share your paragraph by reading it aloud to someone who is not in your class.

ACTIVITY - 8

Just as poems have symbols and India has symbols, stories often have symbols, too. Many stories use animals as symbols. For example, many stories use the lion as a symbol of royalty. How many times have you heard that a lion is a king? Different people can give the same symbol for different meanings. For some people, cats symbolize long life, but other people might say black cats symbolize bad luck. In many parts of India, the cow is a symbol of many things for many people.

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Read the story carefully to yourself. Mark any word that you don't understand. Use a dictionary, the internet, or your classmates who may help you to understand each word and idea in the story.

Think about what the animals in the story might be symbols of.

The Fox and the Rabbit

There was once a very clever fox who loved to brag of his cleverness. One day he said to the rabbit, "I am so clever," he said "that I know a hundred ways to escape enemies."

"Wow," the rabbit said. "I have only one, but it works well."

The fox said, "You should listen to me, I will teach you many, many more. You should know many ways to escape like I do."

Just at that moment, the fox and the rabbit heard the cry of a pack of hunters coming toward them.

Immediately, the rabbit leaped down his hole and was gone. He called back to the fox, "This is my plan. What are you going to do?"

The Fox thought first of one way, then another, then he thought of a better way, then he considered another way, and while he was thinking of all his clever choices, the hunters caught him up and he was soon carried off.

ACTIVITY - 9

One way that we know that the fox and the rabbit are symbols is because they do not represent real foxes or rabbits. When something is not symbolic, when it only represents exactly what it is in real life and nothing else, we say it has its "literal" meaning. *Literal*, *literary*, and *literature* are all related to the word for *letters*, for words. The literal meaning of a word is it's exact, factual meaning. For example, if your friend says, "I am dead tired", you know that your friend is not literally dead, because he is alive and talking to you! He is exaggerating. He is not using the literal meaning of the word "dead".

We know that the fox and the rabbit story is not *literally* about foxes and rabbits. Real foxes and rabbits do not have conversations about cleverness, at least, they don't have such conversations in English!

One way to think about the meaning of a symbolic story is to think about things in real life that are *like* the symbol in the story. What kind





of person might act the way the fox does? What kind of person or characteristic of a person might the rabbit represents? Is the rabbit clever or foolish? Is he brave or cowardly? In real life, what might behave the way the hunters do, coming in quickly and ending the conversation the way they do?

Discuss these ideas with a group and work together to write the paragraph.

Our group thinks that the fox symbolizes _____
because he is like _____ real
life. The rabbit stands for _____
because he is like _____ in real life. The
hunters might represent _____ because
_____.

ACTIVITY - 10

Read the story to yourself. Mark any words you don't understand. Use a dictionary, the internet, or your classmates who may help you to understand each word and idea in the story.

One night, Emperor Akbar dreamt that he had lost all his teeth, except one. The next morning he invited all the astrologers of his kingdom to interpret this dream.

After a long discussion, the astrologers prophesized that all his relatives would die before him.

Emperor Akbar was very upset by this interpretation and so sent away all the astrologers without any reward.

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Later that day, Birbal entered the darbar. Emperor Akbar related his dream and asked him to interpret it. After thinking for a while Birbal replied that the Emperor would live a longer and more fulfilled life than any of his relatives.

Emperor Akbar was pleased with Birbal's explanation and rewarded him handsomely.

Many people believe that their dreams have symbolic meaning, but people may interpret the symbols very differently. For example, many people dream of problems that they are having in life. But some people might think of their problem as a huge mountain that needs to be overcome. Another person might dream of a problem as a locked door that needs a key. Another might see a high wall as a symbol of a problem.

In the activity about the rabbit and the fox, you thought about ideas and people that could be symbolized by the rabbit and the fox. Now think about objects that might symbolize some ideas. Use ideas from your own thoughts or dreams or think about stories and poems you've heard.

Think of some different objects that can symbolize these ideas:

A problem might be symbolized by a _____ or a _____.

A solution to a serious problem _____ might be symbolized by a _____ or a _____.

Growing up might be symbolized by a _____ because it grows up very quickly or a _____ because it grows up very slowly or a _____.

Learning might be represented by a _____ because _____.

Share your ideas with your classmates. Make a chart showing how many different symbols your classmates thought of.

	Number of symbols
How many different objects did classmates think of to symbolize problems?	
How many different objects represented solutions?	
How many different objects stood for growing up?	
How many different symbols for learning did your class think of?	

