

## “METAMORPHOSIS” Overview

This module will explore how motif, symbols, and theme are developed in the novella “Metamorphosis” and will result in a thematic essay written at the end.

### Definition of key terms

from the Masters Review – a platform for emerging writers – Feb 24 entry and Ms. Brooks.

#### Symbol:

An object used to represent something else. For example, when we see a red light in traffic, we know it means stop. In literature, however, when a red light acts as a symbol it is used to convey an idea or emotion, like anger, death, or perhaps love. If a broken glass appears in a scene, think about what the author might want us to understand, and if that symbol conveys something deeper about the story. If a glass breaks during a discussion about divorce it helps to draw attention to, and in many ways represents, a fragmented family.

A symbol occurs only once in a story. However, when a series of related images or symbols appear, they reflect a motif.

#### Motif:

A recurring element in a literary work, meaning the idea or symbol occurs again and again. When related symbols repeat to enhance or bring an attention to an idea, you know you’ve identified the story’s motif. Take the shattered glass. Let’s say a repeating symbol for brokenness appears many times as a series of related images: a crushed glass, a car that won’t start, a bad investment, or an injured pet. Each of these symbols occurs once, but services the larger motif of brokenness or fragmentation in the narrative.

#### Theme:

Both symbols and motifs lead to a greater understanding of the story’s theme, which is the overall message, or lesson generated by the narrative. If symbols for brokenness appear as the story’s motif, what is the author trying to say about brokenness? Does it relate to love, families, and relationships? If a child breaks the window of a misunderstood neighbor’s house, the author might be using this symbol to comment on the gaps in understanding between people who don’t know each other. If the glass that shatters during a marital spat is later cleared, that might reflect the couple’s choice to start anew. So, themes are best started with “In a world where” and then set the stage for the world presented in the work (where families struggle to survive, where fear dominates people’s lives). Finally, put the lesson about that motif and that world at the end. Here are two examples.

In a world where families struggle to survive, it is only through love and friendship that they find peace.

In a world where fear dominates people’s lives, the best way through is to find the passion to fight against the uncertainty. Themes DO NOT use first (I, me, my, we, us, our) or second person (you). They do not use contractions. They use formal language. They also do not tell the reader what to do.

## HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

\*\*ALL dates are subject to change, but if done by these dates, you will be ahead of the game.

### HOMEWORK STEP 1 --Due Friday, Oct 1: from “Metamorphosis” Pages 10-15,

Identify two possible motifs and find a quote from pages 10-15 to support each motif.

- 1) Motif:  
Quotation with correct MLA:
- 2) Motif:  
Quotation with correct MLA:
- 3) List any symbols you see so far:

### HOMEWORK STEP 2 –Due Monday October 4: From “Metamorphosis” Part 1 (Pages 16-18)

**\*\*Be ready for a reading comprehension quiz today.**

- 1) Motif:  
Quotation with correct MLA:
- 2) Motif:  
Quotation with correct MLA:
- 3) List two symbols with explanations of what they symbolized and how they bring meaning to the work.

HOMEWORK STEP 3—Due Tuesday, Oct 5 by 8 AM: "The Metamorphosis" Pages 19-24

At this point, you should have two symbols that you are watching through the work. You should keep your motif in mind as well. But, list the two symbols and find a quotation that supports the meaning of that symbol and could tie to a motif/theme.

- 1) Symbol:  
Quotation with correct MLA:
- 2) Symbol:  
Quotation with correct MLA:
- 3) Idea of a theme so far

HOMEWORK STEP 4—Due Monday, Oct 11 by 8 AM: "The Metamorphosis" Part 2 (Pages 25-31)

- 1) Symbol:  
Quotation with correct MLA:
- 2) Symbol:  
Quotation with correct MLA:
- 3) Expand on your idea of a theme so far

HOMEWORK STEP 5—Due Tuesday, Oct 12 by 8 AM: "The Metamorphosis" Pages 32-39

Use the same two symbols that you had last time. You should keep your motif in mind as well. But, list the two symbols and find a quotation that supports how that symbol grows and changes and could tie to a motif/theme.

- 1) Symbol:  
Quotation with correct MLA:
- 2) Symbol:  
Quotation with correct MLA:
- 3) Expand on your idea of a theme so far:

HOMEWORK STEP 6 – Due Monday, Oct 18 by 8 AM: "The Metamorphosis" Pages 39-End

At this point try to focus on just one symbol you will use for your paper. Find two quotations that would support the analysis of that one symbol. You should keep your motif in mind as well.

- 1) Symbol:  
Quotation with correct MLA:  
Quotation with correct MLA:
- 2) Expand on your idea of a theme so far:

HOMEWORK STEP 7--Due Tuesday, Oct 19<sup>th</sup>: By end of class. Thesis

HOMEWORK STEPS 8-12—Due Wednesday, Oct 27 by 11:59 PM submitted to Turnitin

**FINAL ESSAY – Pulling it all together**

- 1) Write introduction
- 2) Write body paragraph
- 3) Write second body paragraph
- 4) Write conclusion
- 5) Peer edit and submit final paper to Turnitin

Essay Prompt

"The Metamorphosis" has many symbols that develop and enhance the meaning of the work. In a four-paragraph essay, you will use one symbol to explain how it reflects a theme in the novella. Your essay should have an introduction, two body paragraphs, and a conclusion. All paragraphs should follow the five-paragraph essay format we went over earlier. That video is on Canvas if you need a refresher. See below to organize your essay. Also, refer to the essay formatting video.

## How to Format the Paper:

### Open a document with MLA formatting

- Double click on the header and enter your last name by the page number
- Enter your name, teacher's name, Course name (Accelerated Language and Literature I), and date
- Enter a title
- Highlight everything in the body of the paper and delete it.
- Center the Works Cited portion on the Works Cited page.
- Enter the information from the book
- Kafka, Franz. "The Metamorphosis." Classix Press, 2009.

## What to include in your writing:

- Introduction-  
Introductory sentence (interesting lead-in)  
Transition  
Title and author (summary as it pertains to the theme)  
Thesis statement with the theme to answer prompt
  
- Two Body Paragraphs-  
Clear topic sentence  
Context for quotation  
Interpretive quotation using MLA citation  
Commentary to explain how the quotation and symbol reflect the theme  
Insight to the whole work  
  
Do this a second time with a second quotation
  
- Conclusion-  
Tie up all the ideas  
Explain how theme enlightens readers  
Give any new insights