

Symbol, Motif and Theme

9th Grade

Three connected ideas, and how one builds into the next.

These sit in a hierarchy. Each is built from the one before.

Term	What it is	Example
Symbol	an object standing for an idea	a green light for hope
Motif	a symbol or image that recurs	green light appearing throughout
Theme	the idea the motif builds toward	the pull of an unreachable dream

Something is only a symbol if the text does the work. Not every green light means anything.