

What Does It Mean?

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1 The world is full of signs and symbols. In fact, they are so common that we take them for granted. A sign is an object that stands for something else or points

to something else. A sign may call your attention to something. It might also direct you to something.

2 Signs often consist of a picture. They may or may not have words.

The reason for using just pictures is to be sure that everyone understands the sign. The most effective signs can be understood no matter what language a person speaks.

3 Road signs are a good example. Think about road signs you have seen. There are signs that show the curves in a road. There are signs that warn of a deer crossing. There are signs that identify a school crossing. Each of these three signs has no words. Other road signs include one or two words. One of the most well known is a stop sign.

4 Some signs give instructions. There may be some laundry tags in the clothing you are wearing right now. There is a sign that tells if clothing needs to be ironed. There is another sign that tells if it can be washed.

5 Some signs are known by almost everyone. The Red Cross sign and the Red Crescent signs mean "disaster aid" all over the world. The five rings of the Olympic sign are very well known, as well. The sign for handicap access is becoming better known all the time.

6 Symbols are like signs in a way. However, they can be more complex. You might need some knowledge to understand them fully. Unlike signs, symbols may have a different meaning in one culture than they do in another.

7 Color symbols are a good example. The same colors can mean different things to different people. White is a symbol of mourning in Asia. It is a symbol of purity and holiness in the Western world. Red can mean many things. For some it is the color of excitement or power. For others it is a symbol of love. In traffic lights, red means "stop." Green means "go." Amber means "caution" or "get ready to stop."

8 Many animals are used for symbols. In the fables of Aesop, they are symbols of traits in people. For example, the sly fox can be a symbol of cunning. The crow can be a symbol of intelligence. Other examples of animal symbols are the mysterious black cat, the wise owl, and the peaceful dove. The snake is a powerful symbol. It can stand for life or strength. It can also stand for evil or temptation.

9 Mythology is full of symbols. Each god and goddess stood for a part of life or nature. For example, Thor was the Norse god of thunder. His symbol was a hammer. Diana was the Roman goddess of the hunt. Her symbol was a bow.

10 Trademarks are symbols. Think of the ads on television. Most products, from fast foods to cars, have a symbol. Whenever you see the symbol, you think of that product. Think about the sign for a popular restaurant. Even without the words, you probably would know what restaurant it represents.

11 The letters of an alphabet are symbols. They stand for a sound. They also stand for a word or part of a word. The system of Braille is another set of symbols. Different patterns of raised dots stand for certain letters.

12 Some signs and symbols are very old. New ones are invented each day. Look around you. You will be surprised at how many signs and symbols you will find.

COMPREHENSION

- A** Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.
- This article is mainly about
 - why there are so many signs and symbols.
 - the meanings of certain signs and symbols.
 - the colors in modern signs and symbols.
 - Signs with no words are useful because
 - people prefer to look at pictures.
 - words take too long to read.
 - anyone can understand them.
 - A person living in Asia who is going to a party would probably not wear
 - green.
 - red.
 - white.
 - Companies use symbols called trademarks for their products because
 - the trademark makes people think of the product.
 - stores require companies to use trademarks.
 - trademarks make it easier for companies to keep track of their products.
 - The most important difference between signs and symbols is that
 - symbols are always about color.
 - symbols have more complicated meanings.
 - symbols are easier to understand.

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

- B** Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in an article or a story. The other words give you clues.
- Find the word in the article that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.
- to be made up of (2)
 - explanations; directions (4)
 - clothing or other fabrics that require cleaning (4)
 - sorrow (7)
 - warning (7)
 - characteristics or qualities of a person (8)
 - clever at fooling or deceiving (8)
- C** Homophones are words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings.
- too** = also
two = the number after *one*
- Say *too* and *two*. They are homophones.
- Look at each word in **bold type**. Note the paragraph number. Look at the paragraph and find the homophone for the word in **bold type**. Which homophone best completes each sentence? Write the word.



LEARN ABOUT WORDS (continued)

8 **sew** (1)

A sign can be _____ helpful when you are lost.

9 **buy** (5)

Do you _____ products because of their trademark?

10 **sea** (10)

The rough _____ made fishing difficult.

THINK ABOUT IT

D Words with opposite meanings are called antonyms. *Outside* is an antonym of *inside*.

Read each sentence. Which word in the box is an antonym of the underlined word? Write the word. (**Hint:** There are more words in the box than you need.)

empty new stop usually
always take ancient

- 1 Colors almost never mean the same thing to everyone.
- 2 Mythology is full of symbols.
- 3 Some signs and symbols are very old.
- 4 Some signs give instructions.
- 5 On traffic lights, green means "go."

E Most words add an **s** to form the plural. Sometimes, however, words change their spelling to form the plural.

one wolf → two **wolves**

one man → two **men**

Read each sentence. Which of the two words in parentheses () best completes each sentence? Write the word.

- 6 A black cat is a symbol of (**mystery, mysteries**).

7 Some (**story, stories**) contain symbols that the reader must figure out.

8 Long ago, men and (**woman, women**) used mythology to understand their world.

9 A road sign that is hidden by tall (**bush, bushes**) is not very helpful.

10 A (**wolf, wolves**) is a scary symbol in some fairy tales.

F A fact is something that can be proved. It is a true statement. An opinion is what someone thinks. It cannot be proved.

Fact: On traffic lights, the color red means "stop."

Opinion: Red is the best color.

Read each sentence. If it is a fact, write *F*. If it is an opinion, write *O*.

- 11 The Olympic flag has five rings.
- 12 Some signs have words and some do not.
- 13 I think the English alphabet is the most difficult to learn.
- 14 The best signs are colored blue.
- 15 The Red Cross is the best charity.

Comprehension

- A** 1 b **4** a
 2 c **5** b
 3 c

Learn about Words

- B** 1 consist
 2 instructions
 3 laundry
 4 mourning
 5 caution
 6 traits
 7 cunning

- C** 8 so
 9 buy
 10 sea

Think about It

- D** 1 always
 2 empty
 3 new
 4 take
 5 stop
- E** 6 mystery
 7 stories
 8 women
 9 bushes
 10 wolf
- F** 11 F
 12 F
 13 O
 14 O
 15 O