

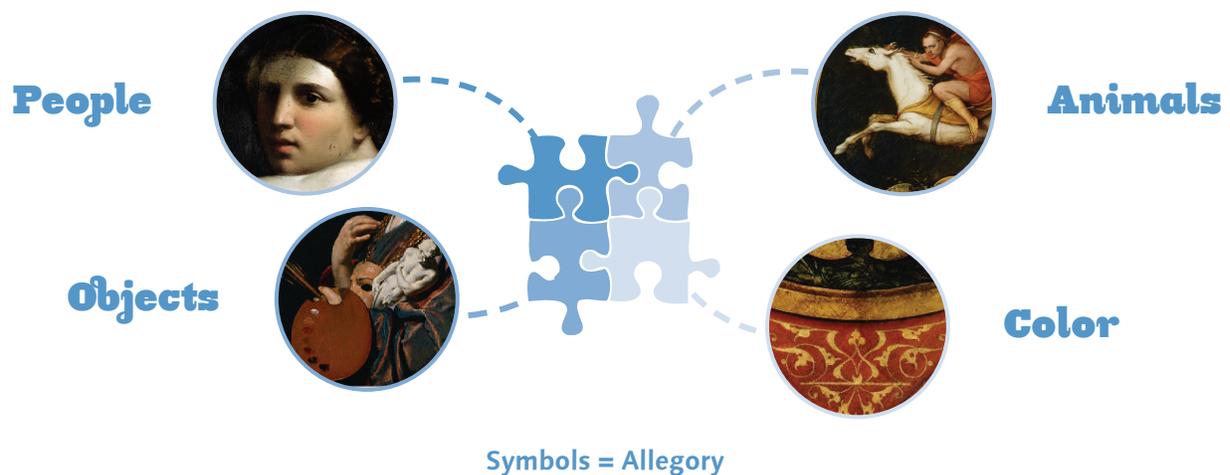
Allegory in Art

Symbols in Art at the Getty

Name _____

The paintings you will focus on in the activities at the Getty Museum each have a visual message. The images of people, animals, objects, and colors in works of art help the viewer (you) figure out this message. You can think of these as pieces of a puzzle. Once you find all of the puzzle pieces, you can assemble a complete picture of the message in the painting.

The people, animals, objects, and colors in the painting are called symbols.
A picture made up of symbols is often called an allegory.



It is not always easy to determine what allegory the artist wants to show you, especially since the meanings of symbols can change through history. Symbols can also have different meanings for different people, and across cultures. With experience, it becomes easier to identify the clues, or symbols, in a painting, and uncover the allegory. Discuss the following with a partner in order to begin thinking about symbols in everyday life.

- 1 Your Dreams:** Some believe that dreams carry symbols that represent hidden meanings. For example, some think that a dream about flying represents freedom. Talk about a crazy dream you've had. Do you think it had any hidden messages? Think about the symbols in the dream. Are they clues to a larger message? What do you think the message of the dream was?
- 2 Your Symbols:** Are there any symbols that carry a special meaning for you? Examples include religious symbols or logos. Why are these symbols meaningful to you? What message do they convey?