**M 6.1 (Basisfach) symbols and leitmotifs[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**Walt in front of his house, with the Gran Torino and the American flag in the background, pointing the gun at the Hmong gang**

24:16

**Definitionen “Symbol”:**

* OALD (<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/symbol?q=symbol>)
* Merriam Webster (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/symbol>)

**Analysing symbols**

*1) Draw a circle around all the objects or people that have a symbolic meaning for Walt (= stand for a more general quality or situation/visible sign of something invisible). Complete the table:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| object, person | symbolic meaning |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

*2) Now analyse the symbolic meanings of the objects with regard to Walt. Write a text. The phrases below can help you.*

**Language Support**

*The phrases below are useful for analysing symbols. Highlight in three different*

*colours:*

1. *phrases you can use in the introduction/conclusion*
2. *phrases you can use to introduce the different objects/people*
3. *phrases you can use to interpret the symbolic meaning of the different objects and people*

*Number the phrases in a logical order – this helps you structure your text!*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Finally, the attentive viewer can spot a … |
|  | The … can be interpreted as a symbol of… |
|  | In the given screenshot, one can see… in the background/foreground/… on the left/right/at the top/bottom… |
|  | The… is symbolic of… This become evident due to the fact that… |
|  | The most prominent object in this screenshot is… |
|  | All in all, it becomes obvious that all the symbols have in common that… |
|  | Moreover, it is no coincidence that there is also… |
|  | As for this third symbol, it seems to symbolize… |

**M 6.1 (Leistungsfach) symbols and leitmotifs**

**Walt in front of his house, with the Gran Torino and the American flag in the background, pointing the gun at the Hmong gang**

24:16

**Definitionen “Symbol”:**

* OALD (<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/symbol?q=symbol>)
* Merriam Webster (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/symbol>)

**Analysing symbols**

*Analyse the symbolic meaning of the objects in this screenshot. Analyse on two levels:*

* *Walt and his personal/psychological situation (What do the symbols stand for with regard to him?)*
* *the historical/ socio-cultural background of the symbols[[2]](#footnote-2)*

**MORE HELP**: **Language Support**

*The phrases below are useful for analysing symbols. Highlight in three different colours:*

1. *phrases you can use in the introduction/conclusion*
2. *phrases you can use to introduce the different objects/people*
3. *phrases you can use to interpret the symbolic meaning of the different objects and people*

*Number the phrases in a logical order – this helps you structure your text!*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Finally, the attentive viewer can spot a … |
|  | The … can be interpreted as a symbol on two different levels: On the one hand, it …; on the other hand, … |
|  | In the given screenshot, one can see… in the background/foreground/… on the left/right/at the top/bottom… |
|  | The… is symbolic of… This become evident due to the fact that…  It may also stand for… |
|  | The most prominent object in this screenshot is… |
|  | All in all, it becomes obvious that all the symbols can be interpreted on two levels: On a personal level, … Moreover, they… |
|  | Moreover, it is no coincidence that there is also… |
|  | As for this third symbol, it seems to symbolize… |

**M 6.1 (Basisfach, Leistungsfach) symbols and leitmotifs[[3]](#footnote-3)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | In the given screenshot, one can see… in the background/foreground/… on the left/right/at the top/bottom…  **(Walt standing his ground when the Hmong gang threaten Thao, surrounded by many symbols: gun, flag Gran Torino)** |
| 2 | The most prominent object in this screenshot is… **(gun)** |
| 3 | The … can be interpreted as a symbol on two different levels: On the one hand, it …; on the other hand, …  **gun – on a personal/ psychological level: symbolic of Walt’s self-reliance/ readiness to defend himself as a war veteran; historically: right granted by the Bill of Rights: defend your property with guns – strength, self-responsibility** |
| 4 | Moreover, it is no coincidence that there is also… **(American flag)** |
| 5 | The… is symbolic of… This becomes evident due to the fact that…  It may also reveal…  **flag: Walt’s patriotism, his pride in his country; his personal history; may also reveal his fear that being surrounded by so many different cultures values that are important to him might get lost; together with the gun: may represent the idea of America as a country of freedom, including the freedom of the right to bear arms and defend yourself** |
| 6 | Finally, the attentive viewer can spot a … **(Gran Torino)** |
| 7 | As for this third symbol, it seems to symbolize…  **Gran Torino and its being a vintage car: Walt’s living in/not willing to let go of the past; the car stands for times in which he was a successful member of society, contributing to the country’s economic strength; American engineering/ economic strength as well as its decline at that point in the movie** |
| 8 | All in all, it become obvious that all the symbols can be interpreted on two levels: On a personal level, … Moreover, they…  **personal level: Walt trying to defend values that are important to him and that he feels are being threatened by the changes around him (refusal to create a sense of belonging with these surroundings)**  **historical level: traditional American values (ambiguous: should not be forgotten or are not up-to-date anymore?)** |

1. Screenshot-Auswahl, Definitionen und Erwartungshorizont vgl.: Schwerpunktthemenkommission der Regierungspräsidien Baden-Württemberg: *The Ambiguity of Belonging. Gran Torino*, S. 62, 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Je nach Vorkenntnissen der SuS (bzw. Vorarbeit im Kurs) müssen hier zusätzliche Informationen gegeben werden. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Die abstrakteren gesellschaftlich-historischen Bezüge sind nur auf dem erweiterten Anforderungsniveau Teil des Erwartungshorizonts. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)