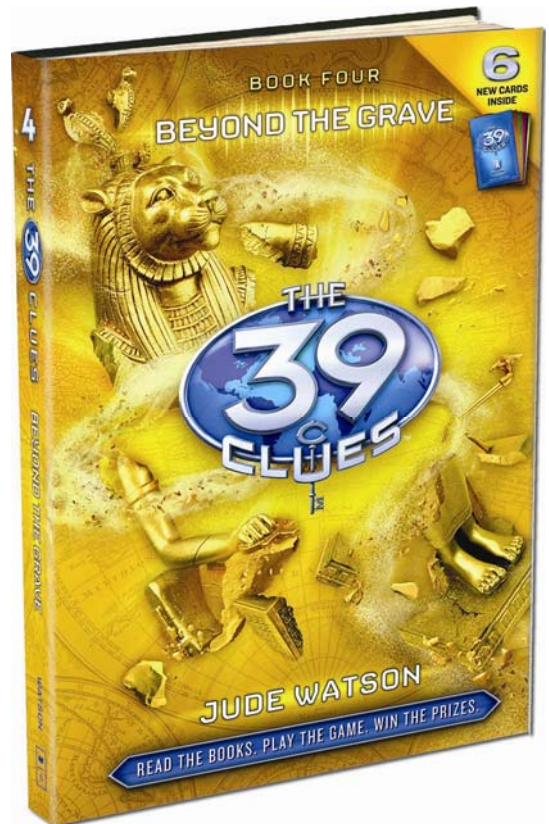


The 39 Clues Book #4: *Beyond the Grave* Teacher's Guide

Theme: Symbols



Guide to The 39 Clues #4: Beyond the Grave by Jude Watson

Theme of this section: Symbols

What the Book is About

A clue found in Book 3 sends Amy and Dan jetting off to find out just what's behind the fierce rivalry between the Tomas and Ekaterina branches of the Cahill family. Was a clue stolen from the Tomas branch? Where is it now? And most important, can Amy and Dan get their hands on it before their rivals do? It's a wild race that will take Amy and Dan deep into the bowels of the earth . . . and right into the hands of the enemy.

About the Author

Jude Watson is a pseudonym for Judy Blundell, author of *What I Saw And How I Lied* (Scholastic Press), winner of the 2008 National Book Award.

What could be more fun than writing in your journal? Well, how about writing Queen Amidala's journal for her? Jude Watson is currently the most celebrated author in the prequel-era of the Star Wars phenomenon. She's no stranger to science fiction - her own series, entitled *Danger.com*, is a mystery series based on the Internet. Watson became involved with LucasBooks when an editor she had worked with in the past selected her to write *Captive to Evil by Princess Leia Organa* (Star Wars Journal). Since then Watson has penned the Star Wars Jedi Apprentice series as well as journals for *Queen Amidala* and *Darth Maul*.

Although the books are written for children ranging from 9 to 13 years of age, Watson has found a large fan base with adults! That's not a surprise since the stories are not only timeless, but also universal.

She lives in Katonah, New York, with her husband and daughter.

Symbolism — The Key to Crack the Clues

In the 39 Clues series, Dan and Amy use symbols that exist in pictures and in words to crack the clues. In literature, symbolism is an element of plot that is used to discover the deeper meaning of a story. A literary symbol is something that means more than what is first presented. It can be an action, a person, an object or an item that has a literal meaning in the story but also represents another meaning as well.

Name Symbolism - authors often use names to suggest something about their characters. For instance Dan and Amy have been told to beware of the Madrigals - an unknown group that threatens their hunt for the clues. Just what or who are the Madrigals? At this point, the reader doesn't know who they are but by looking at the name symbolism, a few guesses can be made.

First, the word "mad" is in Madrigals. Mad can mean angry or it can mean crazy; either definition leads us to believe the Madrigals aren't going to help Dan and Amy! Examine the names of the characters in the 39 Clues series. What do their names tell the reader about the character? What is the deeper meaning? For instance, Jonah Wizard's last name can mean illusionist. In what way is Jonah an illusionist?

Object Symbolism - This form of symbolism is used to add or reinforce meaning. The jade necklace is a symbol on many levels. First, it reminds Amy of her beloved aunt. Grace had always worn this necklace when she was alive and called it her good luck charm. Secondly, the Chinese call jade the "stone of heaven." Therefore, the necklace represents or symbolizes Grace's constant presence with Dan and Amy even though she is no longer alive.

Action Symbolism - A character's actions can symbolize a change in their way of thinking about themselves, about others or about their life. For instance Nefertari's tomb was designed to allow the ruler to say good-bye to her life as she descended the stairs. As Irina descended into Nefertari's tomb, she worried about stumbling down the stairs so she held on tight to the railing. Her actions symbolize her desire to hold on to her current life. However, as she entered the antechamber, she began to feel overwhelmed by the beautiful paintings celebrating life, death and rebirth and began to wonder if she could or wanted to change her own life.

Hunting the Symbols

Hunting symbols in a story like the 39 Clues may help you to unlock many of its mysteries. To uncover symbols, the story must furnish a clue that a detail is to be taken symbolically. There are several ways to discover symbols in a story. Think about if an object is mentioned frequently in a book, like Grace's necklace. If it appears in the text often and is described in detail, it is probably important.

What do you think Grace's guidebook symbolizes? How is it described? How often does the author mention it in the book? What does it represent to Dan and Amy? Remember that symbols can have more than one meaning. Dan and Amy also visited Nefertari's tomb. What kind of rebirth did they experience in book number four?

Dan and Amy often trust their instinct while they are on the hunt for a clue. As you think about symbols, you should trust your own instincts and feelings too. Allow yourself to think deeply about the plot, actions and characters to make connections to uncover the story within the story.

Finally, one of the best ways to understand how symbols work in literature is to research what is written about symbols in classic literature. Once you understand what to look for and how to think, your symbol search will add an exciting adventure to your reading journey.

Activities for 39 Clues Book Four: Beyond The Grave

Celebrate Your Life

Nefertari's tomb was filled with beautiful art on the walls celebrating her life. In this activity, student will create their own 3-dimensional paper pyramid that will reveal their life and the people they love. First, have students bring in photographs and magazine picture that represent their lives. Then cut four triangular shapes and a base to create a 3D pyramid. Students will glue the pictures to one side of each of the triangles. The other side of the paper can be painted to look like a pyramid. Pyramids are then assembled leaving one side that opens like a door to reveal each student's life.

Pictograph Scavenger Hunt

Pictographs transcend language barriers and can be understood in any language. In this activity, students will use pictography to create clues to represent locations around their school. First discuss with the class how pictographs are a form of writing and are understood no matter what language a person speaks. Then discuss pictographs that could be used for objects and locations in your class. When they get the idea, divide students into groups and have them design pictographs to represent various locations around the school. Finally, hide each group's clues in the various locations so that one pictograph clue leads to the next clue. Were the groups able to find the treasure at the end?

Hieroglyphs

Hieroglyphs are a form of communication that was used to record history and communicate in ancient Egypt. They were used in pyramids to help guide the dead to their next life. In this activity, students will explore how to read and translate hieroglyphs.

Using an Egyptian alphabet chart, have students write their name using the symbols on paper or even draw them in clay. Once they become familiar with the hieroglyphs, see if they can translate a message on the board or even a quiz! Students can also have fun with hieroglyphs by writing notes to each other to see if their partner can decode their message.

[Hieroglyphs — Egyptian Alphabet Chart](#)

Personal Symbols

Have students think about a symbol that represents them. Start by having them do a mapping web about themselves; include activities, personal passions, people they admire, things they love to do, family and friends. Once they have a complete picture of themselves, have them think about symbols that represent each of those ideas. Finally, have them decide on one symbol that best represents them as a person. Students can then draw a picture of the symbol and describe how it represents them. An additional activity could include having them analyze their name. Does it symbolize them or do they think there is another name that fits them better? What about own life? What actions in their life could have symbolic meaning?

Guide written by Laura Stockwell, Fifth Grade Teacher, Orlando, Florida