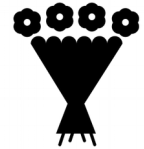


Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Symbols **Sample Answers** *Evidence and Analysis*

Directions: Describe or use a quote to identify three instances in which each symbol appears in *Mrs Dalloway*, and write a short paragraph describing the context and significance of that appearance. Then write a longer paragraph analyzing the broader meaning of the symbol in *Mrs Dalloway*.



Flowers

Quote or Description	Context and Significance
1.	
2.	
3.	

Meaning of the Symbol

The first line of the book is **Clarissa Dalloway** saying she will “buy the flowers herself,” and she soon enters a flower shop and marvels at the variety. Flowers are a traditional symbol of love and femininity, but for Clarissa they also represent the joy and beauty that can be found in everyday life. Woolf also uses the symbol in a more satirical sense as well, as **Elizabeth** is compared to a flower by would-be suitors and **Richard** brings Clarissa roses instead of saying “I love you.” **Sally**, the most rebellious female figure of the book (when she was young), cut the heads off of flowers instead of cutting their stems, and **Aunt Helena** found this “wicked.” This shows how Sally deals differently with femininity (flowers) than is traditional to the older generation (Aunt Helena). In her very act of kissing Clarissa, one could say that Sally picks a flower.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____



The Prime Minister

Quote or Description	Context and Significance
1.	
2.	
3.	

Meaning of the Symbol

Mrs. Dalloway began as two different short stories, and one of them was called “The Prime Minister.” In the novel the **Prime Minister** acts as a symbol of England’s traditional values and social hierarchy, which have begun to decline as a result of World War I. When **Peter Walsh** wanted to insult **Clarissa** and suggest she would give up her ideals to become a “perfect hostess,” he said that she will marry a prime minister. **Lady Bruton**, on the other hand, uses “Prime Minister” as a compliment to **Hugh Whitbread**, another figure of English tradition. The car that is possibly bearing the prime minister is a spectacle in the street, but then people turn away from it to look at the airplane advertisement. At Clarissa’s party the Prime Minister’s arrival is greatly anticipated, but when he actually shows up he is a disappointment. Throughout the novel people cling to their ideas of “greatness” in English society, while the reality becomes more and more sobering and pathetic.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____



Big Ben

Quote or Description	Context and Significance
1.	
2.	
3.	

Meaning of the Symbol

Big Ben is a famous clock tower and London monument, but it also serves as an interesting symbol of time and tradition in the book. The clock tower is part of the Palace of Westminster, and so in one way it acts as a symbol of English tradition and conservatism, the attempt to pretend that the War and modern life haven't changed anything. But by its very nature Big Ben is also a clock, and so it dispassionately marks the endless progression of time, which waits for no one. The striking of the clock is the main divider in the narrative of *Mrs. Dalloway*, and interrupts characters' thoughts and actions with "leaden circles dissolving in the air." Time is an important theme of the novel (Woolf's original title for the book was "The Hours"), as **Clarissa** and **Septimus** both feel the danger of living even one day, and all the characters experience vibrant memories of the past. The striking of Big Ben is then a continuous reminder of ever-present time, which is both linear (the progression of hours) and circular (the constant presence of the past).