

Literary Analysis

SYMBOL

A **symbol** is a person, place, object, or action that represents an abstract idea or feeling. For example, a cross is a symbol of Christianity, and an eagle may symbolize strength or patriotism. In addition to its common meanings, a symbol may take on a particular meaning from the context of the work in which it appears.

Directions: In the poem “The Tyger,” Blake uses a tiger to symbolize his very complex view of creation. Tell what Blake is asking about the tiger’s creation in each of the lines listed in the first column of the chart.

The Tiger as Symbol

Lines	What the Poet Is Really Asking
“In what distant . . . thine eyes?” (lines 5–6)	
“What the hammer . . . was thy brain?” (lines 13–14)	
“What immortal . . . fearful symmetry?” (lines 23–24)	