# Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Focused** **Activity**

#### Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Class \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Score \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Life of Pi

Motifs And Finding Supports

**Motifs-** motifs are the repetition of words, objects, incidents that create patterns in the novel. Author’s use these patterns to support the themes of their work. Below are the key motifs in the novel *Life of Pi* and the significant meanings of these patterns.

* **limitations of language:** Throughout the novel Pi has difficulties describing some of his experiences. He explains that some experiences are sometimes best “felt.”
* **dreams and hope**: Despite his hardships, Pi maintains hope and continues to survive.
* **suffering and pain**: Pi endures great suffering while on the ocean. He realizes how much living beings continue to persevere despite suffering and pain.
* **fear and hopelessness:** Pi has fears about the world around him and at times feel a sense of hopelessness. He is afraid of several external factors such as nature, Richard Parker, and his survival.
* **mystical experience**: Pi has many experiences that go beyond the rational mind.
* **projecting human qualities on animals**: Throughout the novel, Pi projects human characteristics onto animals.
* **vision, perspective, eyes, blindness**: Eyes are mentioned frequently as well as its symbolic significance of Pi’s perspective of the world and himself.
* **madness:** Pi engages in a type of “madness” throughout the novel, which helps him in very difficult situations.
* **family and friends and teachers:** Pi has many meaningful relationships that help him through his life.

*Directions*: Below are several motifs that support the themes of the novel. List a minimum of three supports from the novel in which the motif appears. One item from the first section has been completed for you.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| limitations of language | *“I wish I could describe what happened next, not as I saw it, which I might manage, but as I felt it.”* |
| dreams and hope |  |
| suffering and pain |  |
| fear and hopelessness  |  |
| mystical experience |  |
| projecting human qualities on animals |  |
| vision/perspective/eyes/blindness |  |
| madness |  |
| family and friends and teachers |  |

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Life of Pi

Symbols

**Symbols** (Greek, `to throw together') - symbols-like metaphors, similes, personification, and allusions-are a type of figurative language. Symbols must be something material or visible such as colors, objects, animals, people, and places, while the idea it symbolizes must be something abstract or universal.

When analyzing and writing about the significance of symbols, there are some important points to keep in mind:

* Use key words and phrases from the passage-make sure these key words and phrases have quotation marks around them.
* Use key words and phrases reflecting the meanings of the symbols-do not punctuate these key words and phrases.
* Use a variety of words when analyzing the symbolism of passages:
* symbolizes
* correlates
* associates
* connects
* represents
* asserts
* details
* highlights
* changes
* alludes to
* constrains
* invokes
* implies
* explores
* exemplifies
* clarifies
* alters
* conveys
* portrays
* manipulates
* repudiates
* inspires
* compares
* describes
* produces
* suggests
* evokes
* demonstrates
* differentiates
* elicits
* refutes
* reveals
* juxtaposes
* documents
* delineates
* construes
* enunciates
* shifts
* solidifies
* creates
* evokes
* maintains
* transcends
* emphasizes
* dispels
* depicts
* connotes
* enhances
* specifies
* suggests
* illustrates
* signifies
	+ - For certain symbols, especially colors, they can represent negative, positive, or both ideas.

*Directions:* The symbols in the work are given with their most common universal meanings. The passages listed include the symbol/s. Underline the key words and phrases in the passage, and discuss the significance of the symbol in connection with the work. Use this structure for each of your responses: point of passage/content, symbols/evidence, purpose/commentary.

**NUMBER THREE:** represents a cycle: beginning, middle, end.

1. Passage from story containing the symbol (Underline key words)

“But the great beast was not behaving like a great beast, to such an extent that the hyena had taken liberties. Richard Parker’s passivity, and for three long days, needed explaining. Only in two ways could I account for it: sedation and seasickness.” (page 137)

“I had tea with Father Martin three days in a row.” (page 56)

“The three wise men stared at each other, breathless and disbelieving. Lord, avert their eyes from me, I whispered in my soul. All eyes fell upon me.” (page 66)

Significance of Symbol (make a connection between the symbol and the ideas in the story) [minimum of 7 sentences using CEI]:

**BOAT/SHIP:** Associated with the water and unconscious, representing the unknown which can be frightening. Vehicles such as boats symbolize a transition and transformation of one’s self moving from one phase of life to another

1. Passage from story containing the symbol (Underline key words)

"The ship sank. It made a sound like a monstrous metallic burp." (page 97)

Significance of Symbol (make a connection between the symbol and the ideas in the work) [minimum of 7 sentences using CEI

**EYES/BLINDNESS:** symbolizes observation and judgment

1. Passage from story containing the symbol (Underline key words)

“A smile every time, but his eyes tell another story.” (page 86)

“Oncoming death is terrible enough, but worse still is oncoming death with no time to spare, time in which all the happiness that was yours and all the happiness that might have been yours becomes clear to you. You see with utter lucidity all that you are losing. The sight brings on an oppressive sadness that no car about to hit you or water about to drown you can match. The feeling is truly unbearable.” (page 148)

“Only your eyes work well. They always pay proper attention to fear.” (page 161)

Significance of Symbol (make a connection between the symbol and the ideas in the story) [minimum of 7 sentences using CEI

**ORANGE**: frequently associated with the abdomen, so it symbolizes one’s appetite. When the color orange is used in a work it frequently has the negative connotation of pride and cruelty and the positive connotation of one’s creative forces and emotions

1. Passage from story containing the symbol (Underline key words)

“It seems orange-such a nice Hindu colour-is the colour of survival because the whole inside of the boat and the tarpaulin and the life jackets and the lifebuoy and the oars and most every other significant object abroad was orange. Even the plastic, beadless whistles were orange.” (page 138)

Significance of Symbol (make a connection between the symbol and the ideas in the story) [minimum of 7 sentences using CEI

**THIRST/THIRSTY:** symbolizes a craving or desire of things beyond one’s immediate reach

1. Passage from story containing the symbol (Underline key words)

“Whereas thirst is a drawn-out affair. Look: Christ on the Cross died of suffocation, but His only complaint was of thirst. If thirst can be so taxing that even God Incarnate complains about it, imagine the effect on a regular human. It was enough to make me go raving mad.” (page 135)

“The hunter , whose name was Richard Parker, picked it up with his bare hands and, remembering how it rushed to drink in the river, baptized it Thirsty.” (page 133)

“There was no question. Thirst pushed me on.” (page 140)

Significance of Symbol (make a connection between the symbol and the ideas in the story) [minimum of 7 sentences using CEI

**CIRCLE** (most common symbol): Because a circle has no beginning or end, it represents infinity, eternity, and wholeness

1. Passage from story containing the symbol (Underline key words)

“And so, in that Greek letter that looks like a shack with a corrugated tin roof, in that elusive, irrational number with which scientists try to understand the universe, I found refuge,” (page 24)

“I felt like a small circle coinciding with the center of a larger one.” (page 62)

“What chance was there that a ship crossing the whole great big Pacific would cut into such a tiny circle? Not only that: that it would cut into such a tiny circle and see me-what chance was there of that? No, humanity and its unreliable ways could not be counted upon.” (page 199)

Significance of Symbol (make a connection between the symbol and the ideas in the story) [minimum of 7 sentences using CEI

**BLACK AND WHITE:** typically represents opposites

1. Passage from story containing the symbol (Underline key words)

“Everything was either pure white light or pure black shadow.” (page 233)

Significance of Symbol (make a connection between the symbol and the ideas in the story) [minimum of 7 sentences using CEI