

Allusion Worksheets

What You Will Practice

By completing this worksheet packet, you will learn how to:

- Define an allusion in your own words.
- Recognize an allusion in a sentence or passage.
- Identify the source of an allusion.
- Explain what an allusion means in context.
- Use context clues to understand unfamiliar references.
- Compare allusions with other literary devices.
- Analyze why an author uses an allusion.
- Write your own sentences containing allusions.

Student Reminder

An allusion is a reference to something familiar.

The reference may be connected to:

- a famous person
- a historical event
- a book or poem
- a myth
- a religious story
- a movie or character
- a place
- a cultural idea

Read carefully. The author may not explain the reference for you.

Name:

Date:

WHAT IS AN ALLUSION?

An allusion is an indirect reference to a person, place, event, story, character, work of literature, or other familiar idea. Writers use allusions because a short reference can communicate a much larger idea.

Example- Marcus is the Einstein of our science class.

The writer does not mean that Marcus is literally Albert Einstein.

The reference to Albert Einstein suggests that Marcus is extremely intelligent or talented in science.

Remember:

Allusion = reference

When you see an allusion, ask: What is the writer referring to?

Then ask: Why did the writer choose that reference?

Try It

Read each sentence. Underline the part that may contain an allusion.

1. After studying all night, Jenna felt like she had climbed Mount Everest.
2. Our new student is a real Einstein when it comes to mathematics.
3. The little team faced the championship favorite like David facing Goliath.
4. Opening that mysterious box could be like opening Pandora's box.
5. My brother thinks he is Sherlock Holmes whenever something goes missing.

Explain It

Choose **one** sentence above and explain what the allusion means.

Sentence number: _____

Explanation:

HOW DO ALLUSIONS WORK?

Follow the Connection

An allusion usually has **three important parts**:

1. **The Reference**- The writer mentions something familiar.
2. **The Original Meaning**- The reader connects that reference with its original story, person, event, or idea.
3. **The New Meaning**- The reference gives the current sentence an additional meaning.

Example- "That difficult test was my Mount Everest."

Reference: Mount Everest

Original idea: One of the world's highest and most challenging mountains.

New meaning: The test seemed extremely difficult.

Allusion Detective

Complete the chart.

Sentence	Reference	What Does It Suggest?
Sarah has the Midas touch.		
He met his Achilles' heel.		
The two competitors were David and Goliath.		
That mistake opened Pandora's box.		

Think Deeper

Why is an allusion often more effective than simply saying what the author means?

TYPES OF ALLUSIONS

Allusions can come from many different sources.

Mythological Allusions

These refer to stories and characters from mythology.

Examples:

- Achilles' heel
- Pandora's box
- Trojan horse
- Midas touch
- Herculean task

Literary Allusions

These refer to books, plays, poems, characters, or authors.

Examples:

- Romeo and Juliet
- Sherlock Holmes
- Don Quixote
- 1984
- Shakespeare

Biblical or Religious Allusions

These refer to familiar stories or figures from religious traditions.

Examples:

- David and Goliath
- Noah's Ark
- the Good Samaritan
- the Promised Land

Popular Culture Allusions

These may refer to movies, television, superheroes, music, sports, or other familiar cultural references.

Example: Public speaking is my kryptonite.

Meaning: Public speaking is a particular weakness.

Practice

Write the type of allusion.

M = Mythological

H = Historical

L = Literary

R = Religious

P = Popular Culture

1. ____ Achilles' heel
2. ____ David and Goliath
3. ____ Abraham Lincoln
4. ____ Sherlock Holmes
5. ____ Kryptonite
6. ____ Pandora's box
7. ____ Romeo and Juliet
8. ____ George Washington

Common Allusions And Their Meanings

Write each allusion with its meaning. (Write only option)

Allusions

A. Achilles' heel, B. Pandora's box, C. Midas touch, D. Trojan horse, E. David and Goliath, F. Cinderella, G. Einstein, H. Herculean task, I. Sherlock Holmes, J. Kryptonite

Meanings

1. _____ An unusually difficult task
2. _____ A person's particular weakness
3. _____ A very intelligent person
4. _____ A hidden problem or danger inside something that appears harmless
5. _____ A small or weak opponent facing a much stronger one
6. _____ A person who seems especially successful at making money or creating valuable results
7. _____ A difficult situation that leads to many unexpected problems
8. _____ Someone associated with solving mysteries or investigating carefully
9. _____ A person or team that succeeds unexpectedly after being overlooked
10. _____ A particular weakness or vulnerability

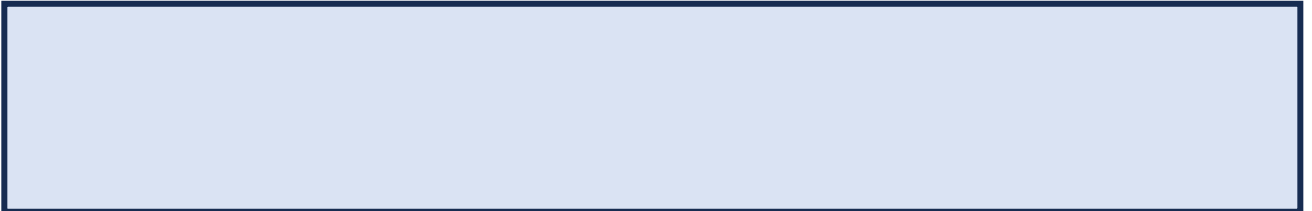
Create Your Own Definitions

Choose **three** allusions from above and explain them in your own words. (from page no 9)

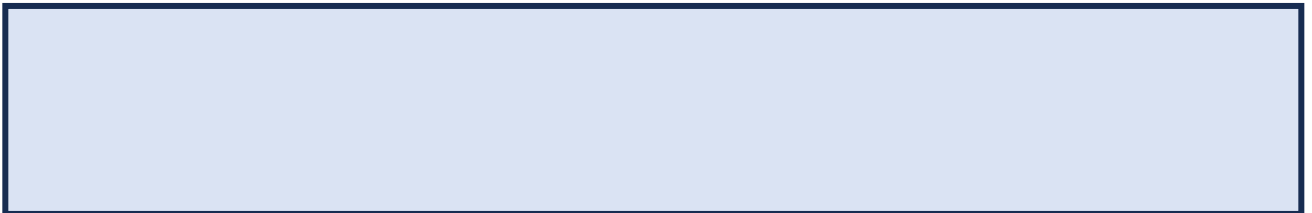
1. _____



2. _____



3. _____



Allusion Examples In Context

Read each sentence carefully.

Example 1: After years of being overlooked, the small team became the Cinderella story of the tournament.

Allusion: Cinderella

Meaning: The team succeeded despite being an unlikely winner.

Example 2: The two small businesses were fighting a David-and-Goliath battle.

Allusion: David and Goliath

Meaning: A smaller competitor was facing a much more powerful opponent.

Example 3: The new policy became a Pandora's box of unexpected problems.

Allusion: Pandora's box

Meaning: One action led to many additional problems.

Example 4: For Ben, speaking in front of a crowd is his Achilles' heel.

Allusion: Achilles' heel

Meaning: Public speaking is Ben's weakness.

Example 5: After winning several competitions, Maya seemed to have the Midas touch.

Allusion: King Midas

Meaning: Maya seemed unusually successful.

Your Turn

Explain the allusion in each sentence.

1. The new student solved the mystery like Sherlock Holmes.
Meaning:

2. The huge project felt like a Herculean task.
Meaning:

3. That website looked harmless, but it was a Trojan horse.
Meaning:

Identify The Allusion

Directions

Read each sentence. If the sentence contains an allusion, write the reference on the line.

1. Our science project was so difficult that it felt like climbing Mount Everest.

Allusion: _____

2. Lena was the Einstein of her robotics team.

Allusion: _____

3. The detective examined every clue like Sherlock Holmes.

Allusion: _____

4. The small company faced a giant competitor in a David-and-Goliath battle.

Allusion: _____

5. His curiosity opened Pandora's box.

Allusion: _____

6. The team's unexpected victory became a Cinderella story.

Allusion: _____

7. The mysterious software update was a Trojan horse.

Allusion: _____

8. For Carlos, forgetting names was his Achilles' heel.

Allusion: _____

9. The scientist's invention seemed to have the Midas touch.

Allusion: _____

10. The teacher asked students to complete a Herculean task.

Allusion: _____

Challenge

Write one sentence containing an allusion to something you know well.

Identify The Source

Directions

Identify the original source of each allusion.

1. **Achilles' heel**

Source: _____

2. **Pandora's box**

Source: _____

3. **David and Goliath**

Source: _____

4. **Romeo and Juliet**

Source: _____

5. **Sherlock Holmes**

Source: _____

6. **Einstein**

Source: _____

7. Trojan horse

Source: _____

8. Midas touch

Source: _____

Write the Source

Write each source to the correct category.

Sources

- A. Greek mythology
- B. The Bible
- C. William Shakespeare
- D. Arthur Conan Doyle
- E. Albert Einstein

1. ____ Achilles' heel
2. ____ David and Goliath
3. ____ Romeo and Juliet
4. ____ Sherlock Holmes
5. ____ Einstein

Explain One

Choose one allusion and explain what readers are expected to know about its original source.

What Does The Allusion Mean?

Directions: Read each sentence. Use the context to determine what the allusion means.

1. After forgetting his lines during the school play, Noah realized that performing on stage was his Achilles' heel.

What does **Achilles' heel** mean here?

- A. His greatest talent
- B. His particular weakness
- C. His favorite activity
- D. His biggest achievement

Answer: _____

Explain: _____

2. The small bookstore competed against a national chain, creating a David-and-Goliath situation.

What does the allusion suggest?

- A. Two equal competitors
- B. A small competitor facing a powerful opponent
- C. A friendly partnership
- D. A historical battle

Answer: _____

Explain: _____

3. When the investigation began, one unanswered question opened Pandora's box.

What does the allusion suggest?

- A. The question solved everything immediately
- B. The question created more problems
- C. The question was unimportant
- D. The question was easy

Answer: _____

Explain: _____

4. Everyone went to Priya when a complicated mystery appeared. She was our Sherlock Holmes.

What does the allusion suggest about Priya?

- A. She was adventurous.
- B. She was wealthy.
- C. She was good at solving mysteries.
- D. She was afraid of mysteries.

Answer: _____

Explain: _____

Allusion Reading Passage

The Unexpected Team

The school basketball team had little experience when the season began. Most students expected the team to finish near the bottom of the standings.

Instead, the players practiced every afternoon and gradually improved. By the final tournament, they were facing the strongest team in the district.

"It feels like David is about to face Goliath," Marcus said before the game.

The other team had taller players, more experience, and a long winning streak. Still, Marcus and his teammates refused to give up.

The final minutes were close. With only seconds remaining, Marcus made the winning shot.

The gym erupted with cheers.

By the end of the night, the team's unexpected victory had become a **Cinderella story** that everyone at school was talking about.

Questions

1. What allusion appears in the passage?

2. What does "David and Goliath" suggest?

3. What does "Cinderella story" suggest?

5. What is the main idea of the passage?
- A. Experienced teams always win.
 - B. The players stopped practicing before the tournament.
 - C. A team that was not expected to win succeeded through effort and determination.
 - D. Marcus was the tallest player on the team.

Answer: _____

Allusion And Context Clues

Sometimes you will not immediately recognize an allusion. That is okay.

You can use **context clues** to figure out what the writer probably means.

Example

After losing every debate for months, Tyler finally won the championship and became the team's Cinderella story.

Even if you do not know the entire Cinderella story, the words "**finally won**" and "**after losing**" provide clues. The allusion suggests an **unexpected success**.

Context Clue Practice

1. The new employee was an Einstein when it came to solving complicated computer problems.

What can you infer about the employee?

2. The proposal seemed harmless at first, but it became a Pandora's box of complaints.

What can you infer about the proposal?

3. The tiny school defeated the state's largest program in what newspapers called a David-and-Goliath victory.

What can you infer about the two schools?

4. After years of financial success, the entrepreneur was said to have the Midas touch.

What can you infer about the entrepreneur?

Challenge Question

Why is context especially important when a reader does not recognize an allusion?

Allusion Vs. Other Literary Devices

Allusion vs. Illusion

Allusion: An indirect reference.

Illusion: Something that creates a false or misleading appearance.

Example

- The author made an allusion to Shakespeare.
- The magician created an illusion.

Allusion vs. Metaphor

A metaphor directly compares two things.

An allusion refers to something familiar.

Example

- "The homework was a mountain."
- This is a metaphor.
- "The homework felt like Mount Everest."
- The Mount Everest reference can function as an allusion.

Allusion vs. Simile

A simile uses like or as to make a comparison.

Example:

- She ran like the wind.
- This is a simile.
- An allusion depends on a recognizable reference.

Identify the best answer.

1. "That new student is an Einstein."

- A. Allusion
- B. Simile
- C. Illusion
- D. Personification

Answer: _____

2. "The magician created an illusion."

- A. Allusion
- B. Metaphor
- C. Illusion
- D. Hyperbole

Answer: _____

3. "Her smile was as bright as the sun."

- A. Simile
- B. Allusion
- C. Illusion
- D. Irony

Answer: _____

4. "The difficult assignment was Mount Everest."

- A. Allusion
- B. Onomatopoeia
- C. Personification
- D. Rhyme

Answer: _____

Multiple-choice Review

Choose the Best Answer

1. What is an allusion?

- A. A direct explanation of an idea
- B. An indirect reference to something familiar
- C. A repeated sound
- D. An exaggerated statement

Answer: _____

2. Why do authors use allusions?

- A. To make every idea harder to understand
- B. To add meaning and create connections
- C. To avoid using descriptive language
- D. To replace every character

Answer: _____

3. Which phrase is an allusion?

- A. "as quiet as a mouse"
- B. "the wind whispered"
- C. "his Achilles' heel"
- D. "the red car"

Answer: _____

4. What does "Achilles' heel" usually suggest?

- A. Strength
- B. Speed
- C. A particular weakness
- D. Wealth

Answer: _____

5. What does "Pandora's box" usually suggest?

- A. A simple solution
- B. A source of unexpected problems
- C. A valuable treasure
- D. A peaceful situation

Answer: _____

6. What does a "Cinderella story" usually describe?

- A. An expected failure
- B. An unexpected success
- C. A scientific discovery
- D. A mystery

Answer: _____

7. Which source is associated with Sherlock Holmes?

- A. Greek mythology
- B. William Shakespeare
- C. Arthur Conan Doyle
- D. Albert Einstein

Answer: _____

8. Which source is associated with David and Goliath?

- A. The Bible
- B. Greek mythology
- C. Shakespeare
- D. 1984

Answer: _____

9. What should a student do after identifying an allusion?

- A. Stop reading
- B. Explain its meaning in context
- C. Ignore the reference
- D. Rewrite the entire passage

Answer: _____

10. Which statement is true?

- A. Every comparison is an allusion.
- B. Every allusion is a metaphor.
- C. Allusions depend on recognizable references.
- D. Allusions can only come from mythology.

Answer: _____

Create Your Own Allusions

Part A: Complete the Sentences

Choose an appropriate allusion.

1. My little brother thinks he can solve every mystery. He is like _____.
2. The assignment was so difficult that it felt like _____.
3. Our team was much smaller than the opponent, so the game felt like _____.
4. After her business became successful, everyone said she had _____.
5. The new decision created so many problems that it was like opening _____.

Part B: Write Your Own

Write **three original sentences** containing allusions.

Sentence 1:

Allusion: _____

Sentence 2:

Allusion: _____

Sentence 3:

Allusion: _____

Part C: Explain Your Choice

Choose your best sentence.

My sentence:

The allusion I used is:

The original reference is:

I used this allusion because:

Final Review

What Have You Learned?

Complete each statement.

1. An allusion is

2. Writers use allusions to

3. One example of a mythological allusion is

4. One example of a literary allusion is

5. One example of a historical allusion is

6. When I find an unfamiliar allusion, I can use

7. The difference between an allusion and an illusion is

Final Challenge

Read the sentence:

"After years of being underestimated, the young athlete's championship victory became a Cinderella story."

What is the allusion?

What is the original reference?

What does it mean in this sentence?

Why is this allusion effective?

NOTES