

What is a symbol?

Symbol (OED 2nd edition)

- **2. a.** Something that stands for, represents, or denotes something else (not by exact resemblance, but by vague suggestion, or by some accidental or conventional relation); *esp.* a material object representing or taken to represent something immaterial or abstract, as a being, idea, quality, or condition; a representative or typical figure, sign, or token; † *occas.* a type (of some quality). Const. *of.*

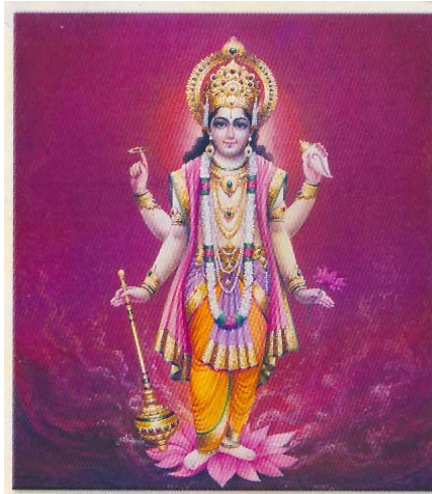
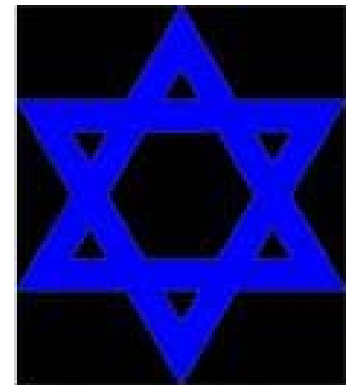
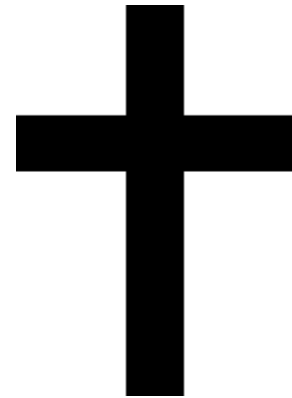
**Can you name a
famous symbol?**

**Symbols may be objects.
What does this symbolize?**

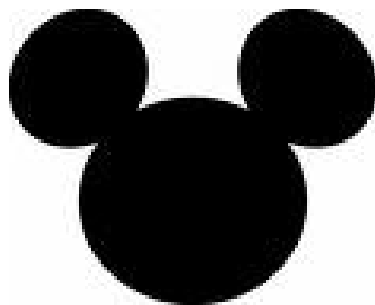
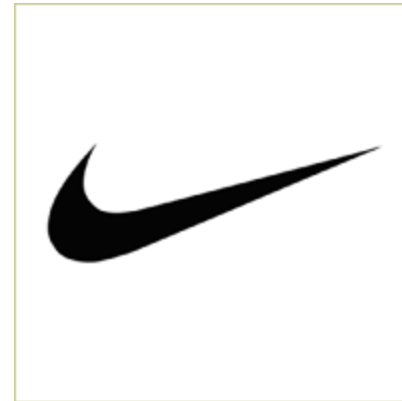


- To many people, the U.S. flag symbolizes not only the nation, but also many of the principles associated with it:
 - Freedom
 - Democracy
 - Liberty
 - Prosperity
 - Hope
 - Equality

**Symbols may be objects or images.
What do these symbolize?**



**Symbols may be images.
What do these symbolize?**



Symbols may do more than represent a product or company

What does this image symbolize?



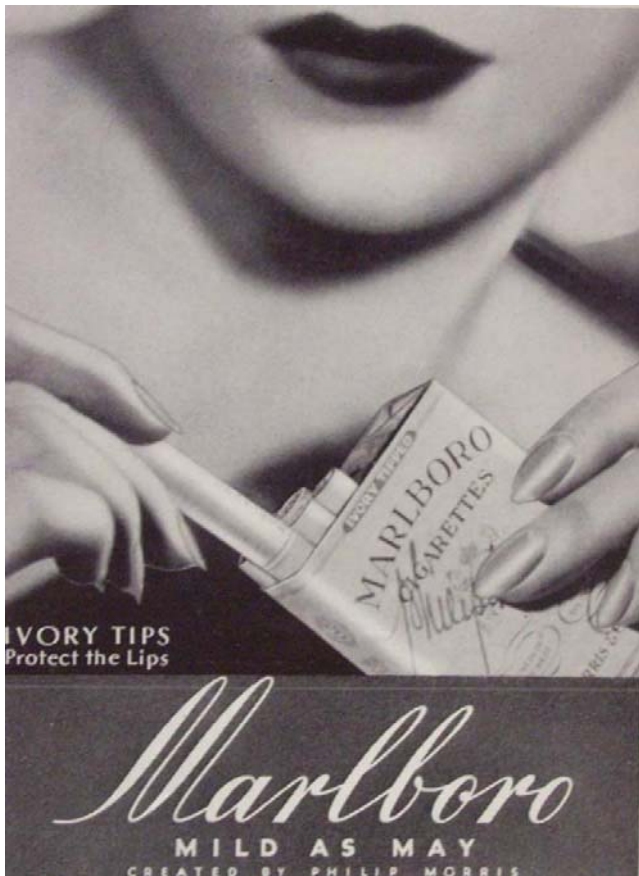
History of the Marlboro Man

On October 21, 2002, NPR's Morning Edition produced a story on the Marlboro Man's history. After listening to it, does your answer to the question about the meaning of his symbolism change?

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1152015>



Marlboro Ads before 1954

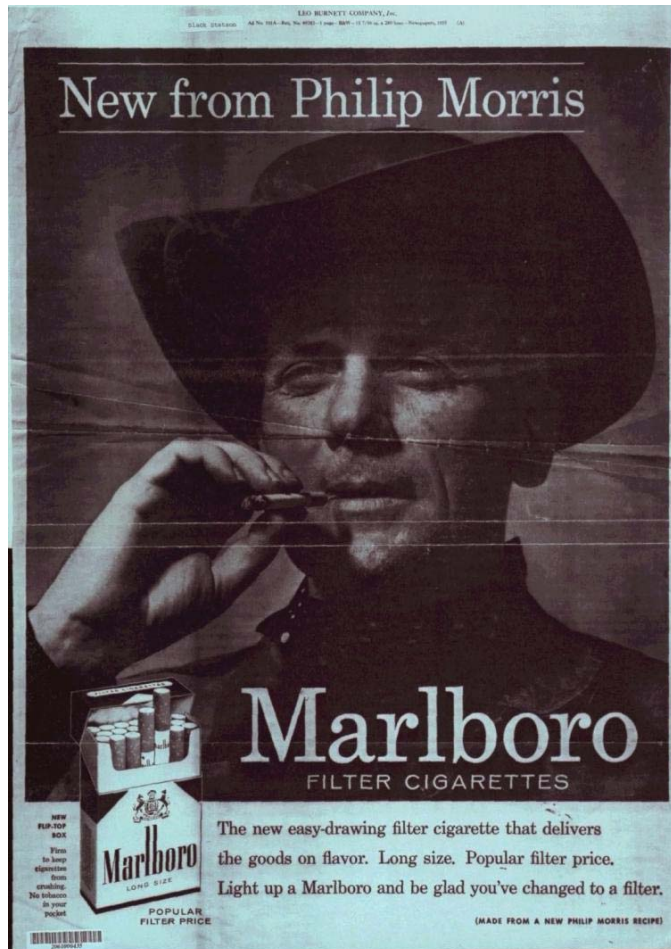


1935



1953

Marlboro Ads after 1954



1955



1999

The Marlboro cowboy has made Marlboro cigarettes the number one selling brand around the world. What is it about this image that convinces so many to light up Marlboros? What does he represent to them?



What does he represent?

- Freedom
- Independence
- Virility
- Strength
- Power



These traits are seen in film cowboys from the dawn of movies, not in the men who worked as cowboys in real life.

Advertisers have not forgotten women!

In 1929, Edward L. Bernays single-handedly broke the taboo against women smoking in public; thereby doubling the potential cigarette market. Listen to how he did it. As you listen, identify the symbol he used, and what it meant to women.

<http://www.cbc.ca/andthewinneris/2012/06/26/spin-cycles-episode-one/>

(The section on Bernays begins at about 32 minutes into Episode 1. The cigarette story begins a little over 2 minutes later.)

In 1968, Virginia Slims used Bernays' idea in a modern ad.

What is the symbol?
What is its promise?

In 1915, Mrs. Cynthia Robinson was caught smoking in the cellar behind the preserves. Although she was 34, her husband sent her straight to her room.

It's different now.
Now there's a slim
cigarette for women
only.
New Virginia Slims.
Regular or Menthol.

Virginia Slims are slimmer than the fat cigarettes men smoke. They're tailored slim to fit your hands, your lips, and your purse. And blended with the kind of flavor women like. Rich, mild Virginia flavor. Extra long. Light one up.

You've come a long way.

30 years later they were still at it.

What is the symbol?

What is its promise?

One famous man once remarked: "Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration."
Virginia Slims salutes the women geniuses of 1984.

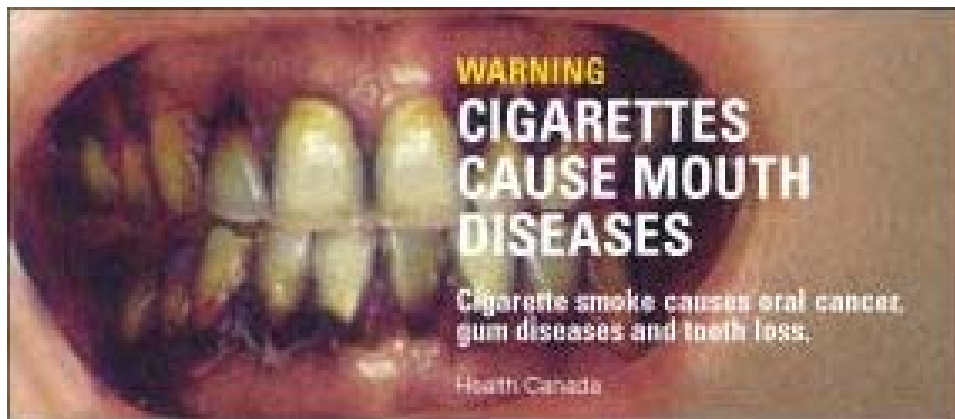
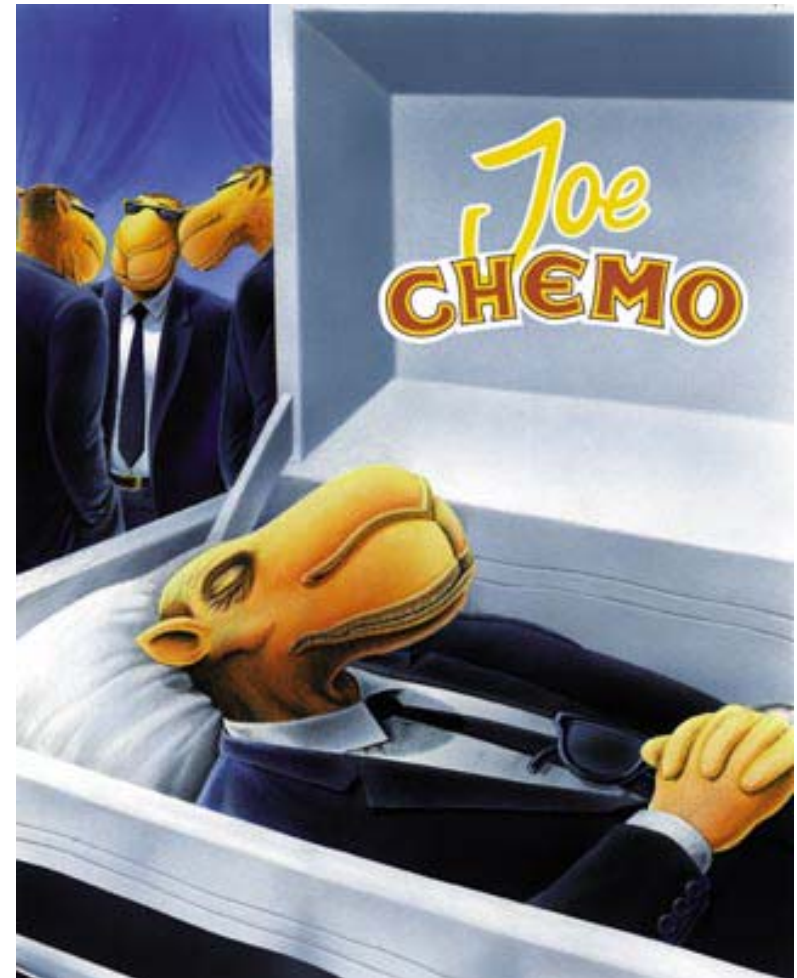
You've come a long way, baby.

VIRGINIA SLIMS

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.

Light: 8 mg. "tar," 0.7 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method. "tar," 0.6 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method. "tar," 10 mg. "tar," 1.0 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method. "tar," 11 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

What if these ads were common?



What do these graphs tell you?

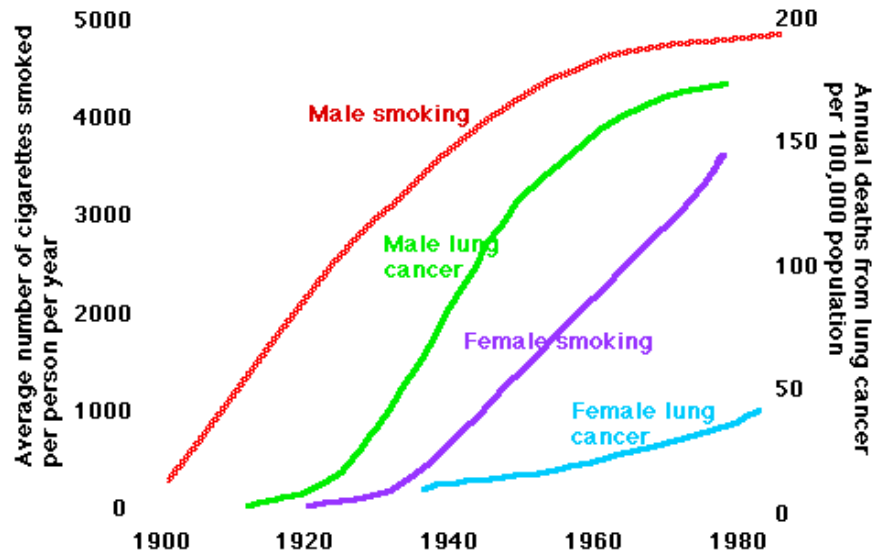
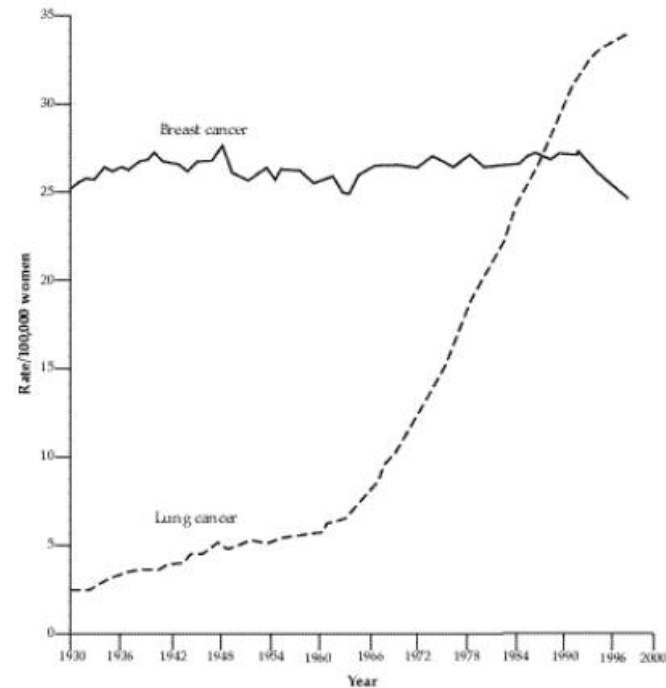


Figure 1.3. Age-adjusted death rates for lung cancer and breast cancer among women, United States, 1930-1997



Surgeon General's Report on Smoking, Women and Health, 2001

Advertisers make info they want you to retain big and easily seen



Who might be attracted by symbols such as these?



Who might be attracted by symbols such as these?

People who feel:

- Weak
- Trapped
- Tied down

**Are these people consciously
aware of the promises in
Marlboro and Virginia Slims ads?**

Are these people consciously aware of the promises in Marlboro and Virginia Slims ads?

Probably not. Remember, research shows we see around 3,000 ads per day. Even if we wanted to, we could not think too long about ads we come across. If we do indeed encounter 3,000 ads per day, how many is that on average for each waking minute?

Calculating the # of ads encountered per waking minute

Estimated number of ads encountered per day:	3,000	
Number of hours per day:	24	
Number of hours asleep:	8	
Number of waking hours:	16	Number of hours per day - Number of hours asleep
Number of minutes per hour:	60	
Number of minutes awake:	960	# of waking hours X # of minutes per hour
Number of ads encountered per waking minute:	3.125	# of ads encountered per day / # of minutes awake

So, if we aren't aware of what ads promise, how do they work?

So, if we aren't aware of what ads promise, how do they work?

Answer: Through our subconscious

Next question: What is the subconscious?

Subconscious (OED 2nd edition)

- **2B.** *absol. as n. Psychol.* The part of the mind that is not fully conscious but is able to influence actions, etc.

1886 *Encycl. Brit.* XX. 48/1 We cannot fix the limit at which the subconscious becomes the absolutely unconscious. **1890** J. M. Baldwin *Handbk. Psychol.* (ed. 2) iv. 57 This whole field in its relation to consciousness has been well called the sub-conscious, from the fact that images formerly in consciousness have now fallen below the threshold, but may rise again+when the stimulation of the centres is sufficient.

We'll look more deeply into how advertisers make subconscious appeals next week, but for now consider this:

- We may often push hopes and fears that seem painful or unattainable into our subconscious minds;
- Linking a product symbol to one of these repressed hopes or fears may lead to a conscious desire for the symbolized product;
- For example, want to escape but can't, maybe lighting up a _____ will satisfy that need to escape, if only for a minute.