

Name:

Date:

Allusion

Practice

An **allusion** is a brief reference within a work to something outside the work. Usually, an allusion relates to one of the following:

- another literary work, such as a reference from Shakespeare or the Bible
- a well-known person, such as a character from mythology
- a place
- a historical event

When writers use allusions, they assume that the reference is well known and that the reader will understand what they are talking about. Allusions allow the writer to express complex ideas without spelling them out. Understanding what a writer is saying often depends on recognizing the allusions and the meanings they suggest.

In each sentence, the allusion is underlined. Write where you think it comes from. Then, write what it means. If you do not know, look it up in a dictionary.

1. Even a person with the patience of Job would feel the injustice of the accusation.

2. Although he is an honest and strong man, John Proctor has an Achilles' heel—his relationship with Abigail.

3. The crowd parted for Abigail as the sea did for Moses.

4. It's a real Catch-22: You can't get a job without experience, and you can't get experience without a job.

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Assess

A Read each allusion and its definition. Then, choose the one that fits in each of the numbered sentences. You will not use all of the allusions.

Pontius Pilate: the man who condemned Jesus to be crucified

Waterloo: place where the powerful French emperor Napoleon was defeated

Cain and Abel: sons of Adam and Eve; the older brother, Cain, killed his younger brother, Abel

Abraham Lincoln: American president who is known for his honesty

Scrooge: character from literature who is known as a miser

Benedict Arnold: general in the American Revolution who became a traitor

Cinderella: poor but beautiful girl who becomes a princess against all odds

Hercules: character from mythology known for his strength

1. My brothers are always fighting. _____
2. The basketball team with no uniforms from the poor high school wins the state championship. _____
3. My best friend tells the teacher that I copied her homework, even though she copied mine last week. _____
4. My mom went back into the grocery store because she realized she had not paid for the case of dog food that was under the cart. _____
5. My brother would not give the poor skinny dog even a little piece of his sandwich.

B For two of the allusions in Part A, write an original sentence using the allusion to describe someone or something.

1. _____

2. _____
