

Audit Checklist

Using Allegory in Creative Writing

August 12, 2026

Use this checklist before the meeting to critique your own work.

A. Surface Story Strength

- ☐ Does the story work if the allegory is ignored?
- ☐ Does the protagonist have a clear desire?
- ☐ Is there escalating conflict?
- ☐ Are there concrete scenes (not abstract commentary)?
- ☐ Is the ending earned rather than explained?

If someone read this as a literal story only, would it still feel complete?

B. Thematic Clarity (Tenor)

- ☐ Can I clearly state my theme in one sentence?
- ☐ Does every major plot event relate to this theme?
- ☐ Are consequences shown rather than preached?

C. Consistency of Symbolic Mapping

- ☐ Does the protagonist consistently embody the intended value/idea?
- ☐ Does the antagonist represent a coherent opposing force?
- ☐ Do setting details reinforce the theme?
- ☐ Are there contradictions in symbolism?
- ☐ If the metaphor stretches, is it productive rather than accidental?

D. Subtlety and Restraint

- ☐ Did I avoid explicitly stating the moral?
- ☐ Did I avoid on-the-nose names?
- ☐ Did I avoid thematic speeches?
- ☐ Does the meaning emerge from action?

E. Vertical Writing (Depth Test)

For three key scenes, ask:

- ☐ What happens horizontally (literal plot)?
- ☐ What accumulates vertically (meaning beneath)?

If the vertical layer is thin, revise.

F. Balance Check

- ☐ Does any paragraph feel like a lecture?
- ☐ Does any character feel like a mouthpiece?
- ☐ Did I sacrifice character complexity for symbolic clarity?
- ☐ Are readers trusted to infer meaning?

G. Edge Testing

Ask:

- ☐ Where does my allegory logically break?
- ☐ Have I ignored complexities that weaken the metaphor?
- ☐ Could expanding one tension deepen the allegory?

H. Final Reflection (Prepare to Share)

Write 3–5 sentences answering:

1. What I attempted allegorically.
2. What worked best.
3. What still feels heavy-handed or unclear.
4. One question I want feedback on.

Bring this reflection with you.