**English 1201: Mending Wall and Visuals Model Answers**

1. What is the major symbol found in this poem? What does it symbolize? How is this symbol being used to develop a theme? Explain with two references to the poem.

The major symbol found in the poem “Mending Wall” is that of the wall itself. The wall symbolically represents the boundaries that we build up between people to keep us separated from one another. If we can keep others at arm’s length we prevent getting hurt, getting too involved/inconvenienced, or becoming vulnerable where our trust can be manipulated. The theme that this symbol helps to create is the idea that we are responsible for the walls we create. This is shown in the poem as, quite literally, the speaker and his neighbour go through the tedious process every spring of “set[ting] the wall between us [them] once again”. While the neighbour believes that “Good fences make good neighbors”, the speaker questions the paradoxical nature of this proverb as, in fact, walls do not foster the togetherness that being neighbourly entails. Even more ironic is the fact that by the end of the poem, it seems as if the wall becomes necessary for the speaker as he has becomes hypercritical of his neighbour for wanting the wall in the first place. He takes offense to the task and comments, “Before I built a wall I’d ask to know/ what I was walling in or walling out,/ and to whom I was like to give offense.” Evidently, the symbol of the wall is extremely important to the establishment of this theme.

1. What literary devices are being used throughout the poem? Underline and label them in the poem above...

See scanned file for “Mending Wall and Visuals Teacher Copy

1. Discuss how the statement “Good walls make good neighbours” from “Mending Wall” is not applicable to the above image. Use your class discussion and the jot notes below to complete this answer.

The statement “Good walls make good neighbours” from the Robert Frost poem “Mending Wall” is definitely not applicable to the visual as the visual presents a photograph of the fall of the Berlin Wall. This wall did not make “good neighbours” in fact, it separated family and friends from one another based on the dominant political systems found on the east and west sides of the wall. People died trying to escape East Berlin as a result of the oppression, and that is why in the visual people seem to be so happy that the wall is coming down; they can’t even wait, and this is shown as they are being lifted over the wall.

1. What effect does proportion and symbolism have in this visual? Explain using two specific references.

The effect of the exaggerated proportion and symbolism in the visual shows the ridiculous nature of the Berlin’s Walls existence. The Soviet Union was really destroyed from within, and this symbolic use of the hammer being used to destroy the wall exemplifies this. The hammer and sickle were the symbols used on the Communist flag, and because they are being used to tear down and collect the rubble of the mess their political system caused, the audience finds a satirical humor in the image.