

A sign is a visible  
stand in  
for invisible ideas.

*For example:*

In our contemporary culture,  
a baseball cap worn with its bill backwards  
(which we *can see*)

stands for

many invisible ideas  
(which we *can't see*)  
such as

"rebelliousness,"  
"resistance to conformity,"  
"edginess,"  
"toughness,"  
"a laid back, devil-may-care attitude,"  
etc.

As an analyst of cultural signs,  
you zero-in on a specific sign that is visible,  
then make persuasive claims about the invisible  
ideas that underlie that sign.