Educating Rita Symbols, Allegory and Motifs

The painting (symbol)
The painting is a symbol of taste, civilization, and refinement. Rita's focus on its more prurient aspects makes her appear unrefined. Frank's focus on its art historical importance and his subsequent ignoring of it (because he is used to it) make him appear civilized.

Rita's dress (symbol)
Rita's dress that she plans to buy once she finishes her exam is a symbol of taste and of achievement; this dress will signify her entry into a new world.

Rita's essays (symbol)
Rita's various essays symbolize her current status in her journey toward education and refinement. Her early essays reflect her lack of progress and her outsider status, whereas her later essays symbolize her change and achievement.

The window (motif)
The window is a recurring motif in the play. It separates the worlds of Frank and Rita, both as a physical and as a symbolic barrier. Rita's changes first begin to happen on one side of the window, and then firmly move beyond it. In later scenes, Rita's preference to sit on the grass and visit plays and travel are all activities outside the window, and are thus things that separate her from Frank.

The blocked door (symbol)
The blocked door symbolizes the difficulties Rita had in not just reaching Frank, but also in reaching this moment in her life in which she is able to finally work towards education and self-improvement. She had to surmount a poor upbringing, terrible schools, a pressure to conform to working class norms.