
Objectives

- Students will be able to identify symbolism in a work of fiction.
- Students will be able to understand the relationship between plot, setting, and character in a work of fiction.
- Students will be able to identify examples of internal and external conflict in a work of fiction.
- Students will be able to correctly use vocabulary words.

William Golding (1911 - 1993)

Sir William Gerald Golding was a British novelist, poet, playwright, and Nobel Prize for Literature winner, best known for his novel, *Lord of the Flies*. He was also awarded the Booker Prize for literature in 1980 for his novel, *Rites of Passage*, the first book of the trilogy, *To the Ends of the Earth*. In 2008, *The London Times* ranked Golding third on their list of “The 50 greatest British writers since 1945.”

Symbolism

It should be understood from the beginning that *Lord of the Flies* is a book that can be interpreted on many levels. However, to get to its deeper levels of meaning we must understand that the story itself is symbolic and that it is constructed almost entirely of symbols. A **symbol** is something that it not only itself, but represents some idea far greater than itself. The United States flag is an example of a symbol. Physically, it is nothing more than a collection of differently colored pieces of cloth sewn together. However, it **symbolizes** the entire United States as well as all of our social and political beliefs.



In this section of *Lord of the Flies* some of the symbols are the boys' fair hair, which symbolizes innocence and inexperience. The school sweaters some of them are wearing not only indicate that they are British, but they symbolize the tightly constructed value system of civilization of Great Britain.

The items on the island itself that serves as symbols are the scar in the jungle caused by the plane crash. It symbolizes the personal emotional injuries that the boys suffered, as well as a hardening of their spirits. The skull-like coconuts are obvious foreshadowing of violence and death that the boys will face. The repeated phrase, "no grown ups" is more than an explanation of the boys' situation, it symbolizes a liberation from the strict rules that adults place on children. In essence, it means "No rules!" and "Complete freedom!"

"Ralph had been deceived before now by the specious appearance of depth in a beach pool." This symbolizes his wariness due to previous betrayal. It also suggests that Ralph may again be betrayed.

Setting, Characters & Plot

The **setting** for this section takes place on the beach of a deserted tropical island in the Pacific Ocean. The **main characters** are Ralph, a twelve year old and a fat, intelligent, and bespectacled boy called "Piggy." The **plot** in this chapter is that the two boys have survived a plane crash and they must survive on a deserted island.

Internal & External Conflict

External conflict occurs when a character is struggling against some sort of external, or outside, force. The force can be caused by another character, natural forces, a group, or society. External conflict can also consist of a verbal confrontation between two characters.

In this chapter we learn that the plane the boys were flying in was shot down. Therefore, a war is occurring. Both the war and the plane crash are examples of **external conflict**.

On the island, Ralph mocks Piggy. This, too, is a type of external conflict.

Internal conflict occurs when a character struggles within over a decision. Traumatic past memories can also cause a character to have internal conflict. Here are some examples from this section:

The character "Piggy" isn't sure if he should tell Ralph his nickname. That indecision whether or not he should trust this other boy, a stranger, is an **internal conflict**.

"Ralph had been deceived before now by the specious appearance of depth in a beach pool." This is also a portrayal **internal conflict** as Ralph tries to decide whether he should trust the appearance of the pool.

Vocabulary

Being able to understand the vocabulary in *Lord of the Flies* will help you better understand and appreciate the story. The following is a list of words from this section that you can use to expand your vocabulary.

Foliage – noun – a representation of leaves, flowers, and branches

Inside the rainforest the *foliage* overhead was very dense.

Jetty – noun – a pier or structure of stones, piles, or the like, projecting into the sea or other body of water to protect a harbor, deflect the current, etc.

We sailed the boat past the *jetty* and inside the harbor it protected.

Motif – noun – a recurring subject, theme, idea, etc., especially in a literary work

Blue flowers appear often in *Lord of the Flies*. It is one of the *motifs* in the story.

Efflorescence – adjective – To burst forth; bloom

The first time you dive a Caribbean coral reef, you will be amazed at the *efflorescence* of life and colors it contains.

Specious – adjective - having a false look of truth or genuineness

The Venus Flytrap looks harmless, but that is *specious*. The plant is a killer!

Growth & Assessment

1. What does the phrase “No grownups” **symbolize**?
 - a. No rules
 - b. No life
 - c. Loneliness
 - d. Desperation
2. What is the **setting** for this section?
 - a. In the jungle
 - b. On the beach
 - c. By a swimming pool
 - d. In the forest
3. Who are the **main characters** in this section?
 - a. Piggy and his aunt
 - b. Ralph and the pilot
 - c. Ralph and Piggy
 - d. Grownups and children
4. Describe Piggy’s **internal conflict** in this section.
5. What is a “motif”?