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## 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.

## Symbolism

It should be understood from the beginning that *Lord of the Flies* is constructed almost entirely of symbols. A **symbol** is something that is not only itself, but represents some idea far greater than itself. Here are some of the symbols in this section:

“Some unknown force had wrenched and shattered these cubes so that they lay askew, often piled diminishingly on each other.”

This description of the boulders on the mountain symbolizes an unseen, but destructive force on the island, and suggests that the boys’ lives will be damaged by future events.

The boys tumbling the large rock down the hill foreshadows them doing the same thing to harm each other in the future.

Simon spoke first.

“Like candles. Candle bushes. Candle buds.”

The bushes were dark evergreen and aromatic and the many buds were waxen green and folded up against the light. Jack slashed at one with his knife and the scent spilled over them.

“Candle buds.”

“You couldn’t light them,” said Ralph. “They just look like candles.”

“Green candles,” said Jack contemptuously. “We can’t eat them. Come on.”

This scene symbolizes the three focuses of the three boys: Simon is spiritual (candles in a church), Ralph is practical and focused on lighting a signal fire, and Jack is angry and thinks first of himself (eating).

The scar in the jungle, from the crash, is a significant symbol early in the story. A scar’s skin is tougher, less sensitive than before it was wounded. The references to the scar symbolize the boys becoming increasingly less sensitive and merciful after they feel they have been insulted.

## *Setting, Characters & Plot*

The **setting** is the place where the story takes place. In this section, the setting shifts from the beach, up into the mountains, and down through the jungle. The **characters** are the people in the story. In this section, Ralph, Jack, Simon, and Piggy are the characters involved. The **plot**, or the storyline, moves ahead with the boys deciding to search the island. Ralph, Jack, and surprisingly Simon go on the adventure. They have a wonderfully fun time and bond together until they find a piglet caught in the vines. Jack cannot bring himself to kill it. Ashamed, he hardens himself against any future humiliations. This is the beginning of the separation between Jack and Ralph.



## *Internal & External Conflict*

**Internal conflict** is when a character struggles within over a decision. Here is the scene that shows Jack's internal conflict as he tries to kill a piglet:

The three boys rushed forward and Jack drew his knife again with a flourish. He raised his arm in the air. There came a pause, a hiatus, the pig continued to scream and the creepers to jerk, and the blade continued to flash at the end of a bony arm. The pause was only long enough for them to understand what an enormity the downward stroke would be.

**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. Here is an example of external conflict from this section:

"I was going to," said Jack. He was ahead of them, and they could not see his face. "I was choosing a place. Next time—!"

He snatched his knife out of the sheath and slammed it into a tree trunk. Next time there would be no mercy. He looked round fiercely, daring them to contradict.

This is the scene after the piglet escapes from the boys. Jack is a self-proclaimed "hunter," and is the leader of the hunter group of boys, but he has never killed anything. When the opportunity presents itself he freezes. The humiliation he feels builds a wall between him and the other two boys who witnessed it. Jack, furious at himself, threatens the other two boys. This scene includes both external and internal conflict in it.

The mental anguish one feels trying to decide whether to take a life or not is a severe form of internal conflict. In Jack, feelings of egotistical pride, repulsion, and even compassion were struggling with one another.

## 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 help expand your vocabulary.

**Hollow** – noun – a small valley

The valleys of New York State were the setting for the story “The Legend of Sleepy *Hollow*.”

**Defile** – noun – a narrow valley or mountain pass

When military troops march through a narrow valley, the leaders refer to it as a *defile*.

**Immure** – verb – to shut in; seclude or confine

The prisoner was *immured* inside the confines of his cell.

**Pliant** – adjective – Easily bent, flexed, or influenced

Fuzzy pipe cleaners are *pliant* so that they can move around curves.

**Glamour** – noun – a mysterious and elusive fascination or allure

The *glamour* of being a musician fades after you have been on the road for six months.

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## Growth & Assessment

1. What **symbolizes** the boys' becoming less merciful after they have been insulted?
  - a. The lagoon
  - b. The conch shell
  - c. The beach
  - d. The scar
2. What is the **plot** for this section?
  - a. Simon, Ralph, and Jack explore the island
  - b. Piggy says that he wants to be chief
  - c. The hunters revolt against the other boys
  - d. The choir boys search for food
3. Which **character** surprisingly goes exploring with Ralph and Jack?
  - a. Samneric
  - b. Simon
  - c. Roger
  - d. Johnny
4. What **internal conflict** does Jack experience in this section?
5. What is a "hollow"?