
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.

This scene is when Ralph informs the boys that the island is uninhabited.

“We’re on an island. We’ve been on the mountain top and seen water all round. We saw no houses, no smoke, no footprints, no boats, no people. We’re on an uninhabited island with no other people on it.”

Jack broke in.

“All the same you need an army—for hunting. Hunting pigs—”

“Yes. There are pigs on the island.”

This symbolizes the invention of a nonexistent threat to the boys. It also represents Jack’s desire for authoritarian rule and his desire for violence.

Then Ralph sets out the method for the boys to speak in turn without being interrupted.

“That’s what this shell’s called. I’ll give the conch to the next person to speak. He can hold it when he’s speaking.” “But—”

“Look—”

“And he won’t be interrupted: Except by me.”

Jack was on his feet.

“We’ll have rules!” he cried excitedly. “Lots of rules! Then when anyone breaks ’em—”

This symbolizes the need for a form of government. The boys love having “no grown ups” because of the freedom, yet they see the need to impose rules, “Lots of rules!” It also represents Jack’s desire for complete control, as long as he is the one in charge.

When telling the boys why the island was a “good” island because of what it contains, Jack says, “Rocks,” and Simon mentions, “blue flowers.” This symbolizes duality which is the fundamental theme of the story: One thing, the island, but actually human nature, can simultaneously possess physical (rocks) and spiritual (blue flowers) elements. It can also simultaneously possess evil (rocks as weapons) and good (blue flowers as souls).

“He wants to know what you’re going to do about the snake-thing.”

Ralph laughed, and the other boys laughed with him. The small boy twisted further into himself.

“Tell us about the snake-thing.”

“Now he says it was a beastie.”

“Beastie?”

“A snake-thing. Ever so big. He saw it.”

“Where?”

“In the woods.”

Either the wandering breezes or perhaps the decline of the sun allowed a little coolness to lie under the trees. The boys felt it and stirred restlessly.

The boys are afraid of the story about the snake-thing and Jack asserts violent leadership by promising to hunt the beast down and kill it. In a moment of mature wisdom, Ralph stands and shouts, “But I tell you there isn’t a beast!” Superficially, this indicates that there is no actual dangerous creature on the island, but it also symbolizes that the boys’ fear is what creates the danger.

Setting, Characters & Plot

The **setting** is the place where the story takes place. In this section, the setting is the platform on the beach. The **characters** are the people in the story. In this case, Ralph, Jack, Simon, Piggy, and an unnamed six-year-old are the characters involved. The **plot** is the storyline. Ralph, Jack, and Simon tell the boys they are alone on the island and that nobody knows where they are; that they could be there for a long time, but that it is a good island. A young boy expresses his fear about an undefined animal (“a beastie”) that he has seen in the shadows.



Internal & External Conflict

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

The small boy looked round in panic.

“Speak up!”

The small boy held out his hands for the conch and the assembly shouted with laughter; at once he snatched back his hands and started to cry.

“Let him have the conch!” shouted Piggy. “Let him have it!”

The external conflicts are between the crowd and the “littlun,” and between the crowd and Piggy.

Internal conflict is when a character struggles within over a decision. Here is an example of internal conflict from this section:

The older boys first noticed the child when he resisted. There was a group of little boys urging him forward and he did not want to go... He bored into the coarse grass with one toe. He was muttering and about to cry.

The little boy has something he believes is important to tell the group, but he is afraid to speak in front of the others. That personal discomfort is a type of internal conflict.

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.

Hinder – verb – to slow down or stop the progress of; hamper

Jerome’s progress climbing the mountain was *hindered* by his broken arm.

Gape – verb – to stare with one’s mouth wide open

When Ugly Arnold showed up at the dance with the Prom Queen, we *gaped* in amazement.

Perpendicular – adjective – standing at right angles, as if to form an “L-shape”

Ted laid flat on the ground and Veronica stood up *perpendicular* by him to form an “L.”

Rational – adjective – having or exercising reason, sound judgment, or good sense

I thought it would be *rational* to fill up the car with gas before we started our road trip.

Growth & Assessment

1. What **symbolizes** the dual nature of the people in this section of the story?
 - a. The scar and palm trees
 - b. The platform and the trees
 - c. Water and fire
 - d. Rocks and blue flowers
2. What is the **setting** for this section?
 - a. The mountain top
 - b. The scar
 - c. The platform
 - d. The swimming pool
3. Which **character** exclaims that the boys should have “lots of rules”?
 - a. Piggy
 - b. Simon
 - c. Jack
 - d. Ralph
4. What is the little boy’s **internal conflict** in this section?
5. What does it mean to “hinder” someone?