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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 not only represents itself, but also represents some idea far greater than itself. Here are some of the symbols in this section:

Ralph said to Jack “Will you light the fire?” Fire is a symbol of destruction. Jack lighting the fire is symbolic of him being the one who will be responsible for the troubles that are going to occur.

Jack knelt too and blew gently, so that the smoke drifted away, thickening, and a tiny flame appeared. The flame, nearly invisible at first in that bright sunlight, enveloped a small twig, grew, was enriched with color and reached up to a branch which exploded with a sharp crack. The flame flapped higher and the boys broke into a cheer.

This scene is a symbolic metaphor for how the boys’ little society will devolve into violence. Fire is a symbol for – among other things – destruction. Let’s analyze this metaphor: Ralph is starting the fire as a symbol of rescue and a return to civilization. However, Jack sees Ralph starting the fire as an act of power, so he begins to blow on it to challenge Ralph’s leadership, or at least to share in the glory of starting the fire. Because of Jack’s self-serving intentions, the fire’s symbolism changes to one of destruction.



The flame that is at first “nearly invisible,” is symbolic of the fact that the division between the boys had begun (it was an **internal conflict**). The fire then envelopes a small twig, symbolizing how Jack becomes consumed with destructive ideas. The fire then spread, just as anger will soon spread among the boys. The fire “was enriched with color.” This is symbolic of how Jack’s tribe will color themselves in war paint. Just as the fire “reached up to a branch which exploded with a sharp crack,” Jack’s tribe moves into an elevated position on one end of the island and then launches rocks down on intruders. Piggy is knocked off a cliff by a boulder and his body hits a rock in the water, exploding his head. “The flame flapped higher,” symbolizes how Jack’s tribe sets their part of the island on fire to smoke out Ralph. “The boys broke into a cheer,” has a double meaning, symbolizing Jack’s tribe yelling as they are chasing Ralph, and that the surviving boys are rescued.

In this section, it is symbolic that Jack decides his group will take responsibility for the fire and the lookout, which puts them at the top of the mountain. The mountain top is a position of power, and the responsibility for both the fire and the lookout symbolize a desire to create order. (We will see how responsibly Jack carries out his duties.)

### *Setting, Characters & Plot*

The **setting** is the place where the story takes place. In this section, the setting is the top of the mountain. The **characters** are the people in the story. In this case, Ralph, Jack, Simon, Piggy, and the rest of the boys are the characters involved. The **plot** is the storyline. The boys try to start a signal fire. They are successful, but it burns too fiercely and produces no signal smoke. The boys also agree to more rules regarding meeting discipline. Jack decides that his group will take responsibility for the fire and keep a lookout. The fire burns out of control, destroying a large part of one side of the mountain. The boys begin to blame one another for their problems.

### *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, animals, groups, or society. External conflict can also consist of a verbal confrontation between two characters. Here are three examples of external conflict from this section:

1) Piggy was surrounded before he could back away. “Here—let me go!” His voice rose to a shriek of terror as Jack snatched the glasses off his face.

2) “I got the conch—” said Piggy.

Jack turned fiercely. “You shut up!”

3) Ralph took a sudden step forward.

“I told you to. I told you to get a list of names!”

“How could I,” cried Piggy indignantly, “all by myself?”

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

“I got the conch,” said Piggy bleakly. He turned to Ralph. “I got the conch, ain’t I Ralph?”

Unwillingly Ralph turned away from the splendid, awful sight.

Ralph is torn between his responsibility to enforce assembly rules for Piggy’s sake, and his enjoyment of teasing Piggy himself.

## *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 you expand your vocabulary.

**Subside** – verb – To become quiet, less active, or less violent; abate

The laughter in the classroom *subsided* when Miss Grinchly walked in.

**Contemptuously** – adverb – Manifesting, feeling, or expressing deep hatred or disapproval

The villain looked the hero *contemptuously* and said, “You will never defeat me, Aquaman.”

**Assent** – verb – To agree to something especially after thoughtful consideration; concur

I have considered it, and *assent* to you marrying my daughter, Mr. Gallant.

**Virtuous** – adjective – Conforming to moral and ethical principles; morally excellent; upright

Members of the clergy attempt to lead a *virtuous* life.

**Recrimination** –noun – A retaliatory accusation

After Jasper accused me of stealing, I made the *recrimination* that he cheated at cards.

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## Growth & Assessment

1. What **symbolizes** destruction in this section?
  - a. The lagoon
  - b. The platform
  - c. Fire
  - d. Fruit
2. What is the **setting** for this section?
  - a. The beach
  - b. The mountain top
  - c. The platform
  - d. The lagoon
3. Which **character** takes responsibility for the signal fire in this section?
  - a. Jack
  - b. Piggy
  - c. Simon
  - d. Roger
4. What is Ralph's **internal conflict** in this section?
5. What does it mean to be "virtuous"?