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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 some idea far greater than itself. Here are some of the symbols in this section:

Many of the symbols in *The Lord of the Flies* are religious, referencing both Testaments of the Bible.

“As if it wasn’t a good island.”

Astonished at the interruption, they looked up at Simon’s serious face.

“As if,” said Simon, “the beastie, the beastie or the snake-thing, was real. Remember?”

The two older boys flinched when they heard the shameful syllable.

Snakes were not mentioned now, were not mentionable.

In the Book of Genesis, Satan first appears in the Garden of Eden as a snake. On one level, this excerpt simply shows that the boys are embarrassed about being afraid. A deeper level establishes taboos. Even deeper, Golding intentionally has the boys call the unnamed terror “the beastie,” which is a reference to the Book of Revelations. That the first time the boys believe they see this evil thing it is in the form of a snake. This is a reference to the Garden of Eden: “This is a good island.”

This sets the ground for later symbolism that Simon is the only boy who can be depended on to help Ralph build the shelters. Simon will later become a Christ-figure in the story. In addition, before Jesus began teaching, he worked as a carpenter. Simon is faithfully building the shelters, but it is he who makes the unexpected comments that the island is good and that the beastie is not real.

“We don’t make enough smoke,” Ralph said.

Ralph has not given up hope of rescue. Jack has all but forgotten it. Smoke symbolizes hope. This continues to contrast the difference between Ralph who wants to remain civilized, and Jack who is turning savage.

## *Setting, Characters & Plot*

The **setting** is the place where the story takes place. In this section the setting begins with Jack, months later, tracking pigs in the forest. It then shifts back to the beach shelters. The **characters** are the people in the story. In this case, Ralph, Jack, and Simon are the characters involved. The **plot** is the storyline. Jack went on a pig hunt and was unsuccessful. Ralph and Simon attempt to build shelters; they too are unsuccessful. Jack and Ralph let their frustrations out about the situation, and their failure to appreciate each other's efforts rise to the surface.



## *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, by natural forces, an animal, a group, or society. External conflict can also consist of a verbal confrontation between two characters.

The external conflict in this section is between the Jack and Ralph. Each boy is so focused on what he believes to be the priority that he fails to recognize the other's sincere effort to help:

His invitation might have passed as casual, were it not for the undertone.

“You wouldn't care to help with the shelters, I suppose?”

“We want meat—”

“And we don't get it.”

Now the antagonism was audible.

“But I shall! Next time! I've got to get a barb on this spear! We wounded a pig and the spear fell out. If we could only make barbs—”

“We need shelters.”

Suddenly Jack shouted in rage.

“Are you accusing—?”

“All I'm saying is we've worked dashed hard. That's all.”

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

“I went on,” said Jack. “I let them go. I had to go on. I—” He tried to convey the compulsion to track down and kill that was swallowing him up. “I went on. I thought, by myself—” The madness came into his eyes again. “I thought I might—kill.”

Jack is explaining to Ralph why he let his hunters give up on the hunt while he, Jack, continued. It also shows that Jack’s need to erase his earlier shame at not being able to kill the piglet, which is driving his desire for meat to an unhealthy obsession.

He paused for a moment, not sure if Ralph would take him seriously.

“Go on.” Ralph said.

“If you’re hunting sometimes you catch yourself feeling as if—” Jack flushed suddenly.

“There’s nothing in it of course. Just a feeling. But you can feel as if you’re not hunting, but—being hunted, as if something’s behind you all the time in the jungle.”

Jack is struggling with himself about whether or not to admit the eerie feelings he has while hunting in the jungle. That indecision about whether or not to trust Ralph with potentially embarrassing information is an 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.

**Tendrils** – noun – A piece of hair

The tree had its branches wrapped in the *tendrils* of the vines beneath it.

**Pendant** – noun – A hanging object, generally attached to a necklace or an earring

Maurice wore a leather string around his neck with a *pendant* hanging from it.

**Node** – noun – The joint of a stem from which a leaf begins to grow

The leaf grows on a stem that attaches to a branch at the *node*.

**Furtive** – adjective – Stealthy; secretive

He didn’t want anybody to catch him looking, so he took a *furtive* glance at the jewels.

**Declivity** – noun – A downward slope or sloping, as of a hill

People go skiing on the snow covered *declivities* of mountains.

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## Growth & Assessment

1. What **symbolizes** hope in this section?
  - a. The lagoon
  - b. Smoke
  - c. The platform
  - d. The scar
2. What is the **setting** for the beginning of this section?
  - a. The jungle
  - b. The beach
  - c. The platform
  - d. The lagoon
3. Which **character** helps Ralph build shelters?
  - a. Jack
  - b. Piggy
  - c. Samneric
  - d. Simon
4. What is the cause of the **external conflict** between Ralph and Jack in this section?
5. What is a “pendant”?