
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 that *Lord of the Flies* is constructed almost entirely of symbols. A **symbol** is something that it not only represents itself, but also an idea far greater than itself. Here are some of the symbols in this section:

Jack, “If only I could get a pig!”

For Jack, killing a pig would not only erase his earlier shame at being unable to kill an ensnared piglet, it would be a validation of his image of himself as a hunter. Up to this point, he has not killed anything. Killing a pig would be a genuine rite of passage to manhood and enable Jack to provide food and leadership for the group, something he very much wants to do.

However, the constant motif of a pig in the story symbolizes many different things: Pig is simply meat. But, the boys do not need it to survive, so wanting to eat pig can also be interpreted as excessive desire. There have been other claims that pigs represent everything from original sin to the murder of Abel by Cain. Others see the motif as representing savage instincts as opposed to being civilized. Still others view the motif as a long foreshadowing of Piggy’s murder. Regardless, each reader will assign his own meaning to the importance of pigs in the story, which is why authors utilize this device to assist the readers in making a story personally meaningful.

The images of abundance on the island symbolize the needlessness of violence: everything the boys could need has been provided for them: safety, food, fresh water, materials for fire, and shelter. The human desire for more often brings about destruction. This also serves as a symbol of the parable, or a verse with religious principles, about the introduction of sin into the Garden of Eden.



There is, however, another more profound Biblical allusion regarding the character of Simon. Simon is the Christ-like symbol in the story:

Here the littluns who had run after him caught up with him. They talked, cried out unintelligibly, lugged him toward the trees. Then, amid the roar of bees in the afternoon sunlight, Simon found for them the fruit they could not reach, pulled off the choicest from up in the foliage, passed them back down to the endless, outstretched hands. When he had satisfied them he paused and looked round. The littluns watched him inscrutably over double handfuls of ripe fruit.

This is symbolic of Jesus' travels and his being followed by flocks of people whom he also fed. The "littluns" see safety and hope in the person of Simon.

Setting, Characters & Plot

The **setting** is the place where the story takes place. In this section the setting begins in the camp. Simon and the "littluns" are in the fruit trees. The **characters** are the people in the story. In this case, Ralph, Jack, and Simon are the characters involved. The **plot** is the storyline. The boys are becoming angry with each other.

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 dialogue between Ralph and Jack demonstrates that each boy is working hard to help the group. However, it also shows their immaturity since they cannot recognize or appreciate the other's efforts. They believe that their own focus is the most important, to the exclusion of almost everything else. Their heated argument is an example of external conflict:

Indignation took away Ralph's control.

"I was talking about smoke! Don't you want to be rescued? All you can talk about is pig, pig, pig!"

"But we want meat!"

"And I work all day with nothing but Simon and you come back and don't even notice the huts!"

"I was working too—"

"But you like it!" shouted Ralph. "You want to hunt! While I—"

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

They walked along, two continents of experience and feeling, unable to communicate.

“If I could only get a pig!” Jack burst.

“I’ll come back and go on with the shelter,” Ralph said.

The portrayal of these two boys who are friends losing the ability to understand and cooperate with one another demonstrates the internal struggle they experience.

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.

Indignation – noun – Strong displeasure at something considered unjust, offensive, insulting; righteous anger

Priscilla felt *indignation* when she wasn’t elected Prom Queen.

Tacit – adjective – Expressed or carried on without words or speech

Her blush was a *tacit* answer to my compliment.

Gay – adjective – Joyous and lively; carefree

The mood of the party was light and lively, as everyone was *gay* and having a great time.

Clamorously – adverb – Marked by confused din or outcry; tumultuous

The noisy students climbed *clamorously* into the bus on the way to their field trip.

Gaudy – adjective – Bright and showy, but lacking in good taste

Hector’s jewelry was just too much. It seemed *gaudy* instead of classy.

Growth & Assessment

1. What **symbolizes** the needlessness of violence in this section?
 - a. The island's abundance
 - b. The uncontrollable fire
 - c. The platform
 - d. The conch
2. What is the **plot** in this section concerning Ralph and Jack?
 - a. The boys try to determine who will tend to the fire
 - b. The boys work to create the lookout schedule
 - c. A need to kill begins to consume both boys
 - d. Tension begins to build between them
3. Which **character** looks after and feeds the "littluns"?
 - a. Jack
 - b. Piggy
 - c. Simon
 - d. Ralph
4. Why do Jack and Ralph experience **internal conflict** in this section?
5. What is "indignation"?