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

The mirages caused by the midday heat symbolize the question of what is real and what is in the imagination of the boys. This is the classic dramatic convention of “Illusion vs. Reality.” However, in *Lord of the Flies*, mirages also symbolize the island’s dual nature. Of course, the island itself is a symbol of human nature and, thus, its duality of being both physical and spiritual and possessing both good and evil.

“Jack planned his new face.”

Jack’s painted face is referred to as his “mask.” Wearing a mask symbolizes a break from the restrictions of civilization. It also liberates the wearer from the normal rules of behavior. Jack planning his new face means that he is deciding what kind of boy he will be; whom he will become. The face that Jack paints on himself frightens the other boys. Their fear makes Jack feel powerful. Jack’s “mask” becomes a symbol of power that challenges Ralph’s symbol of power: the conch, which is the boys’ symbol of leadership and order. Thus, we have a duality created: power through order (civilization), and power through fear (savagery).



“Simon was floating in the water and kicking with his feet.”

This is an allusion to Christ walking on the water, again setting Simon up as a Christ figure.

“Piggy’s hair still lay in wisps over his head as though baldness were his natural state and this imperfect covering would soon go.”

This image suggests the skin of an actual pig and suggests that, eventually, Piggy will be killed.

## Setting, Characters & Plot

The **setting** is the place where the story takes place. In this section, the setting is several locations along the shoreline. The **characters** are the people in the story. In this case, the littluns, Roger, Maurice, Jack, Simon, and Piggy (not speaking, but present) are the characters involved. The **plot** is the storyline. In this section, the “biguns” are bullying the “littluns.” Jack loses himself and puts on face paint. He scares the others and gains a sense of power from this. Smoke appears on the horizon.

## Internal & External Conflict

**External conflict** occurs when a character is fighting 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. Here is an example from this section:

Roger led the way straight through the castles, kicking them over, burying the flowers, scattering the chosen stones. Maurice followed, laughing, and added to the destruction.

Three of the “littluns” have spent the day building sand castles. Then Roger and Maurice, “biguns,” walk through the castles and intentionally kick them over to bully the “littluns.” Bullying is a form of external conflict.



**Internal conflict** is when a character struggles within over a decision. Here is an example concerning Piggy:

“I’ve been thinking,” he said, “about a clock. We could make a sundial. We could put a stick in the sand, and then—” The effort to express the mathematical processes involved was too great. He made a few passes instead.

Piggy mentally struggles to explain to Ralph how they could build a sundial. His mental struggle 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.

**Opalescence** – noun – Exhibiting a milky iridescence, like that of an opal

The *opalescence* of the inside of the oyster shell was lovely to behold.

**Dubious** – adjective – Arousing doubt; questionable; open to suspicion

Gerhard told me he had been sick, but when I saw golf clubs in his back seat, I was *dubious*.

**Corporate** – adjective – Shared by all members of a unified group; commonly held

Having safe drinking water is a *corporate* interest of everybody in town.

**Belligerence** – adjective – A warlike or aggressively hostile nature, condition, or attitude

I have never insulted my neighbors, but their *belligerence* towards me is very aggressive.

**Chastisement** – noun – To punish, as by beating

The *chastisement* Billy received for lying to his parents was severe. They spanked him hard.

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## Growth & Assessment

1. What **symbolizes** “Illusion vs. Reality” in this section?
  - a. The sand castles
  - b. The stones thrown at Henry
  - c. The platform
  - d. The mirages
2. What is the **plot** in this section concerning Jack?
  - a. He helps to build shelters
  - b. He goes swimming with Ralph
  - c. He creates a mask
  - d. He kills a pig
3. Which **character** throws stones at Henry?
  - a. Roger
  - b. Piggy
  - c. Jack
  - d. Ralph
4. Describe the internal conflict experience by Piggy in this section,
5. What is “belligerence”?

