
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

The novel *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 tide was coming in and there was only a narrow strip of firm beach between the water and the white, stumbling stuff near the palm terrace.



The “tide” symbolizes the coming change in the boys. The narrow strip of firm beach is a symbol for Ralph’s small group that believes in rule by order. “The white, stumbling stuff” (rough beach surf) is a symbol for chaos.

“Ralph chose the firm strip as a path”

Ralph retains his known conventions of civilization. That is “the path” he will follow.

“Only here could he allow his feet to move without having to watch them.”

Only here could Ralph let his real thoughts and emotions out, without having to guard himself in front of the other boys, since he was the chief.

—in this new mood of comprehension—how the folds were stiff like cardboard, and unpleasant; noticed too how the frayed edges of his shorts were making an uncomfortable, pink area on the front of his thighs. With a convulsion of the mind, Ralph discovered dirt and decay, understood how much he disliked perpetually flicking the tangled hair out of his eyes, and at last, when the sun was gone, rolling noisily to rest among dry leaves.

Ralph takes an objective survey of himself and realizes that little-by-little he, too, has become rough and coarse. He decides that he prefers the conventions of civilization to primitivism.

“Forgetting rules”

This a comment Ralph makes about the boys and how their organized group is devolving into an unproductive, unreliable mass.

Setting, Characters & Plot

The **setting** is the place where the story takes place. The setting in this section is the platform on the beach. The **characters** are the people in the story. In this case, Ralph, Piggy, Jack, Maurice, and the boys attending the meeting are the characters involved. The **plot** is the storyline. Ralph gives a firm speech concerning how they are forgetting rules and nothing is getting done; that their irresponsibility cost them an opportunity to be rescued. He emphasizes the need to keep the signal fire lit.

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. Here are some examples from this section.

“Now then. What’s your name?”

The small boy twisted away into his tent. Piggy turned helplessly to Ralph, who spoke sharply. “What’s your name?”

Tormented by the silence and the refusal the assembly broke into a chant.

“What’s your name? What’s your name?”

“Quiet!” Ralph peered at the child in the twilight. “Now tell us. What’s your name?”

The assembly chanting as one to torment an obviously scared child is an example of external conflict.

Internal conflict is when a character struggles within over a decision.

Ralph’s internal conflict in this scene is that some of the responsibilities of being chief are beyond his actual capability. However, he has no choice but to continue being chief, because he is the only one who can keep things organized and keep focused on getting rescued.

Ralph moved impatiently. The trouble was, if you were a chief you had to think, you had to be wise. And then the occasion slipped by so that you had to grab at a decision. This made you think; because thought was a valuable thing that got results. Only, decided Ralph as he faced the chief’s seat, I can’t think. Not like Piggy.

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

Wearisomeness – noun – A state of physical or mental fatigue; tedious or tiresome

The *wearisomeness* of having to work fourteen hours a day all week long is profound.

Jeer – verb – To speak or shout derisively; scoff or gibe rudely

Don't *jeer* at someone's attempts unless you can do better.

Effigy – noun – A crude figure or dummy representing a hated person or group

The football team used an *effigy* of their rival to get the crowd stirred up.

Lamentation – noun – The act of expressing deep and profound grief

The *lamentation* of the child for her lost puppy was heartrending.

Involuntarily – adverb – Done without one's consent or against one's will

Many girls were *involuntarily* married in arranged weddings.

Growth & Assessment

1. What does the incoming “tide” **symbolize** for the boys in this section?
 - a. Coming change
 - b. Eating meat
 - c. Getting rescued
 - d. The mirages
2. What is the **setting** for this section?
 - a. The mountain top signal fire
 - b. The platform
 - c. The jungle
 - d. The shelters
3. Which **character** experiences **external conflict** when the boys begin chanting “What’s your name? What’s your name?”
 - a. Roger
 - b. Jack
 - c. A littlun
 - d. Simon
4. Who experience **internal conflict** before the assembly?
5. What does it mean if something was done “involuntarily”?