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

The situation described is an assembly of the boys where Ralph and other biguns try to reassure the younger boys that they have been all over the island and there is no “beast” on the island. However, after one of the Littluns speaks of the “beast from the sea,” the assembly loses order. Ralph blows the conch loudly to restore order, then Simon “lays hands on” the conch and says “maybe it’s only us.” Simon is referring to the idea that perhaps the “beast” that the children fear is actually themselves. The reference to “laying hands on” and “the beast” continue to point to Simon as a biblical symbol.



“Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express *mankind’s essential illness*.”

“Mankind’s essential illness” is the theme *Lord of the Flies* investigates and considers. Therefore, this line symbolizes the fundamental purpose of this story. Whether or not Golding himself is able to express it, or if he intends for the reader to meditate and draw his own conclusions as to what mankind’s essential illness is, this is the crux of the book. That Golding chose to have Simon’s character speak the line continues to point to Simon’s role as the group’s spiritualist and prophet.

## Setting, Characters & Plot:

The **setting** is the place where the story takes place. In this section the setting is an assembly at the platform. The **characters** are the people in the story. In this scene, all of the characters are involved. The **plot** is the storyline. The boys talk about their fears, and this causes a breakdown of the assembly’s rules of order.

### *Internal & External Conflict:*

**External conflict** occurs when a character is struggling against some sort of external, or outside, force. This type of 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 two examples from this section.

The storm broke.

“Sit down!”

“Shut up!”

“Take the conch!”

“Sod you!”

“Shut up!”

Ralph shouted. “Hear him! He’s got the conch!”

“What I mean is. . . maybe it’s only us.”

“Nuts!”

This scene points to the chaos that breaks loose during the assembly. The boys’ shouting and rude behavior towards each other presents a large-scale external conflict.

Jack’s face swam near him.

“And you shut up! Who are you, anyway? Sitting there telling people what to do. You can’t hunt, you can’t sing—”

“I’m chief. I was chosen.”

“Why should choosing make any difference? Just giving orders that don’t make any sense—”

“Piggy’s got the conch.”

“That’s right—favor Piggy as you always do—”

“Jack!”

Jack’s voice sounded in bitter mimicry. “Jack! Jack!”

“The rules!” shouted Ralph. “You’re breaking the rules!”

“Who cares?”

Not only is Jack directly threatening Ralph, but he is the first boy to discard the rules he himself wanted to create and enforce as soon as those rules are not convenient to him. This representation of hypocrisy and selfish behavior is definitely part of “mankind’s essential illness.” It is also an example of external conflict between Jack’s desire for power and the legitimate authority that Ralph represents. Jack’s disregard for the boys’ established code of behavior promises many more external conflicts to come.

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

Simon felt a perilous necessity to speak; but to speak in assembly was a terrible thing to him. “Maybe,” he said hesitantly, “maybe there is a beast.”

Simon rarely speaks to the group, and when he does, he is usually mocked by them. That is why “to speak in assembly was a terrible thing to him.” Yet, “hesitantly,” he does. Simon is experiencing internal conflict about whether he should speak up or remain quiet.

It is significant to notice that in the beginning of the story almost all the conflict was internal. However, it is after the “tide” has come in that most of the conflicts are external from this point forward.

## *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.

**Gesticulating** – verb – Making or using gestures, especially in an animated or excited manner with or instead of speech

He tried to catch my attention from across the field by *gesticulating* and jumping wildly.

**Perilous** – adjective – Very dangerous

The captain sent us on a *perilous* mission where many of us might be captured or killed.

**Inarticulate** – adjective – Lacking the ability to express oneself, especially in clear and effective speech

Her *inarticulate* speech made it impossible for me to understand what she said.

**Decorum** – noun – Dignified propriety of behavior, speech, dress, etc.

There is an accepted *decorum* inside of libraries. Everybody whispers to be polite.

**Mimicry** – noun – The art or practice of imitating another’s voice, often to mock them

Jonathon Little’s gift for *mimicry* is amazing. He can sound just like a dozen famous people.

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## Growth & Assessment:

1. Which character is a **symbol** of spirituality??
  - a. Piggy
  - b. Simon
  - c. Jack
  - d. Ralph
2. What is the **setting** for this section?
  - a. The scar
  - b. The signal fire
  - c. The platform
  - d. The shelters
3. Where does the littlun suggest the beast comes from in this section?
  - a. The sand
  - b. The air
  - c. The mud
  - d. The sea
4. Why does Simon experience **internal conflict** in this section?
5. What does “perilous” mean?