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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

*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:

“A sign came down from the world of grown-ups.”

The sign was a dead aviator who fell to earth in a parachute. This symbolizes war as the normal human condition. It is also a critical commentary by Golding on the near-perpetual state of war the world had been in since 1933.

The blue flowers that the parachutist is dragged through are a symbol of spirituality, and in this section they also represent the possibility for peace on the island. That the flowers are largely destroyed by the dead man's fall signifies that the possibility for peace is being destroyed.



“Far beneath them, the trees of the forest sighed, then roared.”

This symbolizes that down on the beach the boys will talk, but then havoc will break out.

“Conch! Conch!” shouted Jack. “We don’t need the conch any more. We know who ought to say things. What good did Simon do speaking, or Bill, or Walter? It’s time some people knew they’ve got to keep quiet and leave deciding things to the rest of us.”

The conch is the most powerful symbol to the boys; it means order, leadership and power. Since anyone can take the conch and speak, it is a very egalitarian power. In this scene, Jack belittles the egalitarian nature of the conch saying, “It’s time some people knew they’ve got to *keep quiet* and leave deciding things *to the rest of us*.” Again Jack promotes an authoritarian rule with himself, of course, having power. It also shows Jack’s disdain for the opinion of others.

## *Setting, Characters & Plot*

The **setting** is the place where the story takes place. In this section the setting is the signal fire atop the mountain. It then shifts back to the beach shelters. The **characters** are the people in the story. In this case, Ralph, Jack, Samneric, and Piggy are the characters involved. The **plot** is the storyline. A dead aviator in a parachute falls on the island near the signal fire and frightens Samneric. They think it is the “beast,” and become terrified. They run down the mountain to warn Ralph and the others. At the presentation of an external threat, Jack throws away the rules and refuses Ralph’s leadership, trusting in the anarchy of rule by the strongest.

## *Internal & External Conflict*

**External conflict** occurs when a character is struggling against some sort of external, or outside, force. The force can be another character, a natural force, an animal, a group, or society. External conflict can also consist of a verbal confrontation between two characters. Here is a very significant example from this section.

Ralph could no longer ignore his speech. The blood was hot in his cheeks.

“You haven’t got the conch,” he said. “Sit down.”

Jack’s face went so white that the freckles showed as clear, brown flecks. He licked his lips and remained standing.

“This is a hunter’s job.”

Besides the continuing conflict between Ralph and Jack, the dead aviator gives the boys what they want: a physical manifestation to fear. Psychologically, this makes sense since all the boys have been afraid since they landed on the island, but they had no outward object for their fear; it was turned inward. The ability to externalize their constant fear explains why the boys are so willing to create imaginary danger when none actually exists. Jack’s actions are the cause of the actual death and danger on the island.

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

The rest of the boys watched intently. Piggy, finding himself uncomfortably embroiled, slid the conch to Ralph’s knees and sat down. The silence grew oppressive and Piggy held his breath.

## 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:

**Festoon** – verb – To decorate or adorn

We will *festoon* the room with balloons, streamers, and garland.

**Oblong** – adjective – Describing something that roughly rectangular or ellipsoidal

An egg has an *oblong* shape.

**Bout** – noun – Period; session; spell

Brenda is home with another *bout* of the flu.

**Interminable** – adjective – Having or seeming to have no end; wearisomely protracted

Pastor Eric's sermon on Sunday was *interminable*; he just kept talking and talking and talking!

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## Growth & Assessment:

1. What “sign came down from the world of grown-ups” to the island?
  - a. A crate
  - b. A propeller
  - c. A dead parachutist
  - d. An airplane wing
2. Where does the “sign” from the grownup world finally come to rest?
  - a. In the scar
  - b. In the lagoon
  - c. By the platform
  - d. Near the signal fire
3. Who discovers the “beast”?
  - a. Samneric
  - b. Simon
  - c. Piggy
  - d. Maurice
4. What do the boys believe the “sign from the world of grown-ups” is?
5. What is an “interminable” speech?