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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 stands for not only itself, but represents some idea far greater than itself. Here are some symbols from this section.

“However Simon thought of the beast, there rose before his inward sight the picture of a human at once heroic and sick.”

This symbolizes humanity’s ability to be noble and evil at the same time. It also brings into question the nature of evil itself. Is there an external force that brings evil into our world, or is there an inherently evil part of human nature so that evil is with us wherever we go?

“The landsman’s view of the swell and it seemed like the breathing of some stupendous creature.”

This is a continuation of the Illusion vs. Reality dramatic convention. When Ralph sees this view of the ocean, it changes his perspective regarding how isolated the island is. On one side of the island where the shelters are, the water is calm and they play in it all day. On this side, however, the water is so rough and dangerous that it seems like a liquid creature whose breath smashes the rocks on shore. Even the ocean itself is portrayed as having the dual nature of peace and violence.

“Jack led the way down the rock and across the bridge.”

This symbolizes that Jack will eventually lead a mutiny against Ralph.

## *Setting, Characters & Plot*

The **setting** is the place where the story takes place. The setting is the far end of the island, which has not yet been explored. 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 go to hunt the beast at the one spot on the island where Jack has not personally been. Ralph, displaying his awareness of the responsibilities of leadership, goes into the beast's hiding place alone, even though he is very frightened. After a while Jack appears, although his motivations are more selfish. No beast is found. While at that end of the island, Ralph sees that the signal fire is out again and orders that they search for the beast up the mountain and relight the fire. The boys want to stay where they are and build a play fort. Ralph insists, and angrily the boys obey.



## *Internal & External Conflict*

**External conflict** occurs when a character struggles 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 are two examples from this section.

At once the ideas were back, and the anger. “We want smoke. And you go wasting your time. You roll rocks.” Ralph said.

Roger shouted, “We’ve got plenty of time!”

Ralph shook his head. “We’ll go to the mountain.”

This argument between Roger and Ralph indicates that lack of comprehension the other boys have regarding their situation. Roger’s comment, “We’ve got plenty of time” shows that they have either given up on the possibility of rescue or that they do not have the self-discipline to deny themselves playtime.

“I say we’ll go on!” shouted Ralph furiously. “We’ve got to make certain. We’ll go now.”

“Let’s stay here—”

“Back to the shelter—”

“I’m tired—”

“No!”

Ralph struck the skin off his knuckles. They did not seem to hurt. “I’m chief. We’ve got to make certain. Can’t you see the mountain? There’s no signal showing. There may be a ship out there. Are you all off your rockers?”

Mutinously, the boys fell silent or muttering.

This external conflict is due to the fact that the responsibilities of leadership have caused Ralph to mature much faster than the other boys. They want to stay and play at the new fort they have found, but Ralph knows the practical need for maintaining a signal fire. Ralph’s maturity further separates him from the other boys and will make Jack’s promises of “fun” in his tribe attractive to the irresponsible boys.

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

“Ralph forced his feet to move until they had carried him out on to the neck of land.”

Making one’s move into a situation that one finds terrifying can cause intense 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.

**Exasperation** – noun – The state of intense annoyance beyond bearing; intense frustration

I had been waiting on hold for twenty minutes when my *exasperation* made me hang up in frustration.

**Perspective** – noun – A particular point of view; a way of considering an issue

The *perspective* from the mountain was different than the one from the village.

**Incredulity** – noun – Inability or unwillingness to believe something; disbelief

When she told me she was dating the Prom King I looked at her with *incredulity*.

**Diffident** – adjective – Lacking confidence in one’s own ability, worth, or fitness; timid; shy

Rachel never spoke out in class. She was pretty *diffident* about being noticed.

**Bastion** – noun – A strongpoint in a fortified defense

After the orcs swept the north wall, we retreated to the *bastion* of the Great Tower.

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## Growth & Assessment

1. What **symbolizes** humanity's ability to be noble and evil at the same time?
  - a. The Smoke coming out of the signal fire
  - b. The scar left by the plane crash
  - c. The dead parachutist
  - d. Simon's picture of a human at once heroic and sick
2. What is the **setting** for this section?
  - a. The far end of the island
  - b. Next to the lagoon
  - c. By the shelters
  - d. Near the signal fire
3. What is the **plot** for this section?
  - a. The boys hunt a pig
  - b. The boys hunt the beast
  - c. The boys build their shelters
  - d. The boys build a signal fire
4. What is the cause of Ralph's **internal conflict** in this section?
5. What is a "bastion"?