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

“Faces cleaned fairly well by the process of eating and sweating but marked in the less accessible angles with a kind of shadow.”

When Ralph observes the boys picking fruit during a break on the way to the mountain, he notices a “shadow” on their faces. It symbolizes the low-grade, but persistent, fear they all felt.

“You’ll get back to where you came from.” Simon nodded as he spoke. He was kneeling on one knee, looking down from a higher rock which he held with both hands; his other leg stretched down to Ralph’s level.

Simon’s position higher than Ralph symbolizes him being elevated and able to see things Ralph cannot. This is another Christ reference, with Simon making a prophecy.

“You want a real pig,” said Robert, still caressing his rump, “because you’ve got to kill him.”

“Use a littlun,” said Jack, and everybody laughed.

This symbolizes the mercilessness the boys have developed since being on the island. The biguns should be protecting the littluns. The fact that Jack suggests using one for a sacrifice demonstrates his descent into savagery.



## *Setting, Characters & Plot*

The **setting** is the place where the story takes place. In this section the setting is the pig trail leading up the mountain. The **characters** are the people in the story. In this case, Ralph and Simon are the characters involved. The **plot** is the storyline. Walking on the windward side of the mountain Ralph becomes aware of how isolated they really are. He and Simon gaze at the vastness of the Pacific Ocean. Simon prophesizes to Ralph, “You’ll get back to where you came from.” The boys’ play becomes violent.

## *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 an example of how the violence is escalating among the boys.

The circle moved in and round. Robert squealed in mock terror, then in real pain.

“Ow! Stop it! You’re hurting!”

The butt end of a spear fell on his back as he blundered among them.

“Hold him!”

They got his arms and legs. Ralph, carried away by a sudden thick excitement, grabbed Eric’s spear and jabbed at Robert with it.

“Kill him! Kill him!”

Even the boys’ play turns into terrifying external conflicts. It is significant that it is Ralph who jabs Robert. It is another demonstration in the duality of human nature. Ralph, the symbol of order and civilization, is the boy who gets carried away and jabs Roger.

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

Ralph turned his hand over and examined them. They were bitten down to the quick though he could not remember when he had restarted this, or any time when he indulged it. “Be sucking my thumb next—”

Not only has Ralph bitten his nails to the quick, he has been under so much stress he cannot remember doing it. The way he chastises himself is a form 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.

**Dun** – adjective – Marked by dullness and drabness

Days of rain gave the meadow a *dun* look.

**Covert** – noun – A hiding place for game in a brush or a thicket

Rabbit like to hide their warrens inside of *coverts*.

**Brine** – noun – Sea salt

After being splashed with ocean waves, my clothes tasted like *brine*.

**Obtuse** – adjective – Not quick or alert in perception, feeling, or intellect; dull

Ronnie is not the brightest student in class, in fact, he's a bit *obtuse*.

**Loiter** – verb – To stand idly about; linger aimlessly; to wait with no immediate purpose

It is illegal to *loiter* outside of many public buildings. They don't want people standing in front of their buildings for no good reason.

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## Growth & Assessment

1. What does the “shadow” on all the boys’ faces **symbolize**?
  - a. Smoke
  - b. Malnutrition
  - c. Lack of exercise
  - d. Persistent fear
2. What is the **setting** for this section?
  - a. The shelters
  - b. Next to the lagoon
  - c. On the pig trail up to the mountain
  - d. Near the signal fire
3. Who are the two main **characters** in this section?
  - a. Piggy & Ralph
  - b. Ralph & Simon
  - c. Simon & Piggy
  - d. Jack & Johnny
4. Who experiences **internal conflict** in this section?
5. What does it mean to “loiter”?